



Patten's memoirs become a best-seller in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — Former Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's memoirs are in hot demand here in their second day on bookshop shelves, retailers said Tuesday. Patten's book, "East is West," was on track to become a best-seller in Hong Kong, the former British territory Patten handed over to China last year. "It is selling quite well," a salesman at Swindon bookshop said. Another book retailer said it was his "best-selling book right now." Some 500,000 to 700,000 copies were said to have been bought by bookshops here.

Spielberg to get German honour, visit death camp

BERLIN (AP) — Movie director Steven Spielberg, who directed the Holocaust epic "Schindler's List," will be honoured by German President Roman Herzog this week and will also receive former concentration camp his agents said. Spielberg is travelling to Germany to be presented with the Cross of Merit on Thursday and to talk the same day with

The babies — three boys and three girls, each weighing between 1.1 and 1.47 kilograms — are in good health, said the sources at the hospital. The agency did not give a name or identity of the mother, saying only that she had given birth five times before to triplets. In January, a 34-year-old woman in her 40s gave birth to sextuplets in the southern town of Abuja.

Netanyahu approves sale of fighter planes to Ethiopia

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has approved the sale of 10 MiG-21 fighter planes to Ethiopia, despite objections from neighboring Eritrea, a new spate reported Tuesday. Eritrea had fought Ethiopia for 30 years to gain independence, winning in 1993. Relations between the two Horn of Africa countries had deteriorated since last year, and in June a border dispute boiled over into armed clashes. Netanyahu's spokesman, Avigdor Bushinsky, said he immediately reached out to Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki Tuesday. Bushinsky said the sale of the planes was a "gesture of goodwill" between the two countries. The planes are expected to be delivered to Ethiopia by the end of the year.

Jerusalem Fund opens account in Morocco

RABAT (R) — Beit Al Mal Al Quds (Jerusalem Fund) has opened a nationwide account at Morocco's central bank to support Arab inhabitants of east Jerusalem, a Moroccan official said on Wednesday. "An account has been opened at Bank Al Maghrib [central bank] in the name of Beit Al Mal Al Quds to collect private and public funds and help our Palestinian brothers in Jerusalem," the official said. The account, 555, is available for contributions at the bank's 17 branches throughout the North African country, including the disputed Western Sahara provinces, he said. Morocco's state-run airports authority (ONDA) has said it had paid 10.7 million dirhams (\$1.1 million) to the fund. The account was opened in line with recommendations by a Jerusalem committee of 16 Muslim countries which met in July to boost investments in the Holy City, the official said.

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Roadside bomb kills two SLA men

MARJAYOUN (AP) — Guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb in southern Lebanon Wednesday, killing two Israeli-allied militiamen and wounding five others, security officials said. The bomb blew up near Tallet Ahmadi, where Israeli forces and the allied Lebanese militia maintain an outpost. The camp is on the edge of the enclave Israel occupies in southern Lebanon. Four of the wounded were members of the militia known as the South Lebanon Army (SLA). The fifth was an Israeli soldier. Hizbollah, the guerrilla group fighting to expel Israel from the enclave, said its fighters also attacked the patrol with rockets and machine gun fire, "inflicting further casualties."

Annan wishes King a speedy recovery

UNITED NATIONS (Petra) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has expressed deep satisfaction over the excellent medical results of His Majesty King Hussein's treatment at the Mayo Clinic, wishing the King a speedy recovery. In a statement made to Jordan News Agency, Petra, Annan said on Tuesday he was following up closely and continuously on the King's health improvement, adding that his wife shares this feeling with him. Annan said he is certain that the King will regain excellent health and return home safely, noting that the King enjoys worldwide credibility and esteem for his democracy-oriented policies. Annan said that King Hussein is wisely working towards a comprehensive and just peace in the region. In reply to a question, Annan said he was looking forward to a planned meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. He said he is due to meet the Regent in New York next month if circumstances allow. Prince Hassan is visiting the U.N., describing Prince Hassan as a person who enjoys comprehensive and wise economic and political vision.



Tarawneh, opposition discuss government policies

By Thaq Ayyoub
AMMAN — In the run up to the vote of confidence scheduled for Sept. 20, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh Tuesday met with opposition deputies and briefed them on his government's programme, lawmakers said. Deputy Khalil Haddadin, of the Arab Socialist Baath Party, said that during the four-hour meeting which ended late Tuesday, Tarawneh outlined to the 10 deputies present his government's domestic and foreign policies. "On the domestic arena, the focus was on poverty and unemployment. It also tackled the privatisation process, the Press and Publication and Elections Laws," Haddadin said. Haddadin said opposition deputies reiterated their opposition to privatisation, introduced in the early 90's in accordance with the economic restructuring programme Jordan signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "We urged the premier to slow down the pace of the process to enable national capi-



HRH Prince Ali Ben Hussein Wednesday leads a team of 14 Circassian riders on a horseback journey from Jordan to the Caucasus region of Russia. The 22-year-old Prince said his interest in the Circassian people stems from his childhood and he is keen to preserve their culture, history and traditions and make them known to the world. With the blessing of his father, His Majesty King Hussein, Prince Ali headed north for the Syrian border dressed in the traditional Circassian kalbak (hat) and white tsai (robe) on what is expected to be a 45-day trek (Reuters photo)

Ross arrives in open-ended peace mission

TEL AVIV (AP) — U.S. envoy Dennis Ross' new Middle East peace mission is open-ended and may be extended if progress is being made toward a deal on an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, a U.S. official said Wednesday. However, U.S. officials cautioned that an accord was not yet within reach since Israel and the Palestinians still differ on key issues, such as the scope of withdrawal and security cooperation. Ross was to arrive later Wednesday and hold talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in the evening. On Thursday, Ross was to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Ross will stay "a week or more" if an agreement is close, said a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The envoy could leave some issues for Netanyahu and Arafat to work out in a possible summit in New York later this month when the two leaders, as well as U.S. President Bill Clinton, attend the U.N. General Assembly, Israeli newspapers said. The Haaretz daily said Ross would focus on the

biggest stumbling block — negotiating a new agreement on security issues which Israel has made a precondition for a troop withdrawal. A blueprint for Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation and a Palestinian crackdown on Islamists was worked out by Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. security officials last December, but was rejected by Netanyahu as insufficient. In a meeting Tuesday in Tel Aviv, Palestinian security officials told CIA representatives they were not willing to renegotiate the whole agreement, but would consider suggested changes. Both sides have in principle agreed to an Israeli pullback from 13 per cent, but the Palestinians have rejected an Israeli stipulation that three per cent of the area be turned into a nature reserve with building restrictions for the Palestinians. Netanyahu has said the Palestinians originally accepted the nature reserve idea but then backed down, reportedly due to pressure from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The U.S. peace initiative, initially presented in Janu-

ary, calls for an Israeli withdrawal from 13 per cent and a series of Palestinian security gestures. The Palestinians accepted the proposal, but Israel initially rejected a 13 per cent pullback. The Palestinians have expressed concern that the United States would agree to Israeli demands for changes in the U.S. plan. Saeb Erekat, a senior Palestinian negotiator, said the ball was in Israel's court. "I hope that Mr. Ross will choose the shortest way to have Mr. Netanyahu say yes to the American initiative," he said.

Israel says it's trying for peace, Egypt remains sceptical

CAIRO (AP) — An Israeli official said Wednesday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing his best to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, but Egyptian officials were sceptical any progress has been achieved. Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh spoke after a meeting with President Hosni Mubarak on the stalled peace process, saying Israel wants to restart full negotiations with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. Naveh read a statement saying Netanyahu was "doing his best to reach an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians." "We have a desire, from our side, to return to negotiations with the Palestinians until we reach an agreement," Naveh said. He refused to answer reporters' questions about the status of negotiations, but said Netanyahu had sent him to Egypt to inform Mubarak of the latest developments between Israel and the Palestinians. Naveh's visit came hours before U.S. envoy Dennis Ross was to arrive in the region for talks with Arafat and Netanyahu about a reported American plan to restart talks by having Israeli troops to withdraw from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank. The Palestinians have accepted the plan, which calls for them to step up efforts to curb attacks on

U.S. to promote unity in visits by Kurdish leaders

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States said on Tuesday it would try to encourage reconciliation between the two rival Iraqi Kurdish groups when their leaders make separate visits to Washington in the next two weeks. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), would visit from Sept. 9 to 11 and Jalal Talabani, leader of the "Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, from Sept. 14 to 16. He said Barzani and Talabani, whose groups have veered from close alliance to bloody strife, may meet after the official U.S. talks are concluded. "We want to foster cooperation," Rubin said. "Over the past six months, the Kurdish parties have made excellent progress working together to resolve practical problems. Since February, they have held more than 20 joint leadership meetings." The United States, with Turkey and Britain, has spearheaded several initiatives to end hostilities between the factions, which agreed a ceasefire last year after a round of fighting in which Turkish troops intervened on behalf of the KDP forces. "They may now be ready to make significant progress towards a permanent reconciliation, one that is fully consistent with Iraq's territorial integrity," Rubin said. "Reconciliation fully consistent with Iraq's territorial integrity"

after the 1991 Gulf war and the United States is keen to shore up any resistance to President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. Rubin said one aim of the visits was to discuss providing humanitarian help for the Iraqi Kurds, who have had no benefit from the oil-for-food deal between Iraq and the United Nations allowing sale of some Iraqi oil for food and medical supplies. "Working together with the U.N., the Kurds are ready to begin rebuilding their infrastructure — schools, roads, electricity, etc.," Rubin said. "In extraordinarily difficult circumstances, they are working to cooperate with the international community. And we hope that they will have a chance to talk to a wide spectrum of people in Washington and real leaders will be heard from," he said. The main bones of contention between the long-time rivals are a lucrative diesel fuel trade with Turkey and the regional capital Erbil, both under KDP control.

Majali denies quotation on 'unreturned Jordanian lands'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Wednesday denied he said Israel still retains 400 square kilometres of Jordanian land. "Jordanian rights have been returned in full...and we have fully regained our land and water," Majali told Petra, the national news agency, in a telephone interview from Tunis. Majali was quoted in Sunday's London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat as saying Israel still holds 400-square kilometres of Jordanian land, in a lecture he gave in Tunis. According to an official, requesting anonymity, the former prime minister

was misquoted. "Majali was talking about the fact that Israel had occupied 400-square kilometre (before the signing of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty), but have now been returned." "It was a misquote on behalf of the paper," the official told the Jordan Times.

Khatami seeks peaceful settlement to Taliban crisis

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said Wednesday that it was seeking a peaceful resolution of its conflict with the Taliban in Afghanistan and called on the United States not to interfere in the affairs of the region. President Mohammad Khatami, at a meeting here with visiting Greek Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos, said he "understood" U.S. concern about the possibility of an outbreak of war between Iran and the Taliban. But he pledged that Tehran would do its "utmost to get this problem resolved peacefully through negotiations." "It is very surprising that the Americans voice concern about the developments on our eastern border," state radio quoted Khatami as saying. "Undoubtedly we are more concerned about the security of our region than the Americans are," he said. "We understand their concerns about the outbreak of war, but we are deeply suspicious of how sincere their concerns are," he said. "They become worried when we work to ensure our security, but they take the liberty to launch missiles from afar and kill innocent people," the president said, referring to the U.S. attack last month on a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan and alleged terrorist bases of Saudi dissident Osama Ben Laden in eastern Afghanistan. The attack came in retaliation for Ben Laden's alleged role in the bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania. The United States on Tuesday warned Iran not to attack Afghanistan, urging it to use dialogue to resolve tensions with the Taliban, which controls

most of the war-torn country and provides shelter to Ben Laden. That Iran has "deployed significant numbers of troops and equipment" along its border with Afghanistan is "a matter of serious concern," said U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin. "We are watching closely. We are urging restraint by all sides," said Rubin. "Afghanistan's neighbours must respect its borders and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs." It was the second such warning issued to Iran by the United States in a week. While seeking a peaceful settlement, Khatami vowed Iran "will never tolerate insecurity at its borders or be indifferent to the fate of our nationals, especially diplomats, taken hostage in violation of international law." "We cannot open our borders to bandits, criminals and drug traffickers. Defending our border security and the lives of our citizens is our natural and legal right," he said. "We exercise our rights in whichever way that serves our interests." Iran has mounted pressure on the Taliban to release 10 diplomats and a journalist allegedly taken hostage in a Taliban raid on Iran's consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif, northern Afghanistan, which the Taliban seized last month. Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi warned Tuesday that his country "could resort to any option to get the diplomats released." Iran accuses the United States and Pakistan of using the Taliban to further their interests in the region and curtail Iran's historical influence in Afghanistan.

Although last month's U.S. missile attack generated a sense of relief at least in some circles, suspicions have grown here over the role of the United States in Afghanistan. "Maybe some thought that America has distanced itself from the Taliban after witnessing the militia's acts of savagery and its support for Osama Ben Laden," Iran's state radio said. "But the recent U.S. positions have left no doubt that Washington still sees the Taliban as a strategic ally to further its aims in the region," it charged. The radio challenged the United States to clarify its stand towards the militia's "criminal behaviour." "America should shed light on its true position with respect to the recent developments in Afghanistan — the ethnic cleansing and widespread violation of human rights," it said. "The U.S. government should explain to the world why it implicitly supports or at least keeps silent before the criminal acts committed by the Taliban." "America has closed its eyes to the kidnapping of Iranian diplomats, and it even refuses to confirm it," it complained. The U.S. spokesman was careful to specify he was not confirming the Iranian allegations of the abductions. "Holding diplomats is unacceptable" and — if they have been detained — Iranian diplomats must be freed, he said. The radio also charged that the United States had "implicitly recognised the Taliban by asking Iran to negotiate with the infamous group." Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States are the only countries which have recognised the Taliban as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan.

Security Council moves closer to suspending Iraq sanctions review

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council has fine-tuned a resolution that would punish Iraq for freezing cooperation with U.N. inspectors by suspending periodic reviews of economic sanctions.

The council is expected to vote on the measure later this week, diplomats said.

France wants the resolution to call for the U.N. chief to report to the council as soon as possible on the status of Iraq's overall disarmament, diplomats said. Russia backed the French effort in consultations Tuesday.

That report could set the stage for a comprehensive review of sanctions, which the resolution's sponsors, the United States and Britain, have agreed to as a concession to other permanent coun-

cil members Russia, France and China. The last three are generally more sympathetic to Iraq.

A revised draft circulating Tuesday, however, said no such comprehensive review would occur until after Iraq rescinds its Aug. 5 decision to freeze cooperation with U.N. inspectors. A comprehensive review could result in the council acknowledging some progress in the United Nations' 8-year-old effort to disarm Iraq.

U.N. arms experts must certify that Iraq has destroyed its long-range missiles and chemical, biological and nuclear weapons before the council will lift sanctions, imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, sparking the Gulf war.

Without the regular 60-day

reviews, Iraq has no means to have sanctions lifted.

While the scope and framework of the comprehensive review remain unclear, some council members say it is vital to restore the working relationship between Iraq and inspectors from the U.N. Special Commission.

"We should assess the work of UNSCOM, what progress they made in what kind of areas," said China's deputy ambassador Shen Guofang. "If they made some progress, then we should give some response to the progress." The latest draft resolution includes softer language on Baghdad's decision to end its cooperation with inspectors.

Instead of calling the move a "clear and flagrant violation" of Iraq's obligations, the new draft speaks of a "totally

unacceptable contravention."

U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson said Tuesday that if the suspension of regular sanctions reviews failed to force Iraq to comply, Secretary-General Kofi Annan should get personally involved to break the impasse.

Annan in February brokered an accord that allowed inspectors to visit presidential palaces which Iraq had declared off limits.

Because Iraq has repudiated Annan's accord, "I believe that sometime soon he should actively consider personal diplomacy: going back to Baghdad and saying 'you violated my agreement and this is intolerable,'" Richardson said.

"His prestige is on the line, too," Richardson said.



EGYPTIAN, LEBANESE PRIME MINISTERS MEET: Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Zouari (L) and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri chat during a meeting Wednesday. Hariri began a two-day visit expected to focus on Middle East peace and economic ties between both countries (Reuters photo).

Israel says Russian Jews seeking immigration advice

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Spurred by Russia's economic crisis, Russian Jews are lining up to seek advice and information about immigration to Israel, an official in Jerusalem said Tuesday.

The lines at the offices of the Jewish Agency in Moscow and other cities in the former Soviet republics are so long that the agency officials have begun briefing the people in groups instead of individually, Jewish Agency official Amos Lahat said.

The Jewish Agency is a semi-official body based in Israel that promotes immigration by Jews living abroad. Lahat is head of the department dealing with the Jews in most of the former Soviet Union.

"I'm not saying there's a wave of hysteria," Lahat told Israel radio. "but a process has begun and it will gather impetus." He said Jews from Siberia and the Far East as well as from Moscow and other big cities were asking about how to register for Hebrew language courses and where to settle in Israel.

On Monday the Israeli government adopted a contingency plan for absorbing a new wave of immigrants, if there is one.

Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky, who recently visited Russia, said, "I got the feeling that the self-confidence of the Jews in Russia in their ability to make a living has been shaken." Israel believes if the economic crisis continues, the flow of immigrants from Russia and the other former Soviet republics could swell from about 50,000 a year to 80,000 or even 120,000. Immigration and Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein said.

Sharansky and Edelstein are themselves immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Under the plan, officials are pinpointing cities, towns and villages in Israel where housing and jobs are available for immigrants, and increasing public housing for immigrants.

Also, places are to be made available at Hebrew language schools, and Russian-speaking immigrants who have already settled in Israel are to be enlisted to help newcomers adjust.

Peres calls for Palestinian state to avoid a 'new Bosnia'

MADRID (AP) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres called Tuesday for creation of a Palestinian state to avoid the kind of strife that ravaged Bosnia.

Peres was widely credited with engineering the Oslo peace accords signed with the PLO in 1993, and shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat a year later.

"We must have a Palestinian state," Peres told a press conference in Madrid. "It's better to build two states and be friends than build one and become enemies for the rest of our lives." Peres said an economically viable Palestinian state is the best way to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

Otherwise, one tragic alternative would "a new Bosnia," he said.

Peres spoke after attending a ceremony setting up a so-called Foundation for the Three Cultures (Muslim, Jewish and Christian) in the southern city of Seville.

Peres stressed that ties between Israel and a future Palestinian state could not be those of a rich country with a very poor one.

"Israel needs a developed Palestinian state because otherwise the economic differences will intensify the conflict," Peres said.

No guns at Western Wall — except on the Sabbath

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A gun-toting Israeli eluded security at Jerusalem's Western Wall after police shut off metal detectors to appease rabbis demanding strict observance of the Sabbath at Judaism's holiest site, police said on Wednesday.

A police spokesman confirmed a Maariv newspaper report that security officers routinely disconnected detectors on the Sabbath — from dusk on Friday to sundown on Saturday — under pressure from religious caretakers at the wall.

The report said the Israeli man entered the wall com-

pound with a nine-millimeter gun and left without causing any trouble.

Jewish religious law prohibits operating electronic devices on the Sabbath.

The police only learned of the incident after the gun-carrier wrote a letter of complaint after making it past security guards unchecked.

The Western Wall is a sensitive area in Israeli-Palestinian relations because of its proximity to the Temple Mount, Islam's third holiest site. Police have recently decided to beef up security in the area.

The wall, also known as the Wailing Wall, is a rem-

nant of the outer retaining wall from the second temple destroyed roughly 2,000 years ago. The site draws thousands of people to pray on major Jewish holidays.

Armed Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein entered a mosque in the West Bank city of Hebron in 1994, killing 29 Palestinian worshippers before being beaten to death by survivors.

The spokesman said police were considering alternative ways of screening visitors to the wall that would not violate the Sabbath but would not elaborate.

'Saddam hiding Kuwaiti POWs for use as bargaining chips'

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — An Iraqi Kurdish leader charged in an interview published Wednesday that Baghdad was hiding Kuwaiti POWs for use as bargaining chips in future efforts to mend fences with its Gulf Arab neighbors.

"Iraq intends to use this [POWs] file to improve relations with Kuwait and other Gulf states at a later stage," Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) leader Jalal Talabani told the Kuwaiti newspaper Al Rai Al Aam.

"Our information is that the POWs are still alive and are being transferred from jail to jail in Iraq," he added.

Kuwaiti newspapers, quot-

ing Jordanian sources, have said Iraq's President Saddam Hussein is using the POWs to force the emirate to back down on demands for compensation for the Iraqi occupation of August 1990 to February 1991.

Kuwait has repeatedly demanded clarifications over the fate of 600 people missing or believed to be detained in Iraq since the 1991 Gulf war which ended the occupation. Baghdad has admitted that Iraqi soldiers arrested an unspecified number of people when they withdrew from Kuwait, but says it lost track of them after a Shiite Muslim rebellion which broke out at the end of the war.

Talabani also told the Kuwaiti newspaper of U.S. proposals to set up a new joint administration in northern Iraq, which is controlled by rival Kurdish factions in defiance of Baghdad.

The interview came shortly before planned U.S.-sponsored peace talks in Washington between Talabani and his rival, Massud Barzani who heads the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

Both sides have voiced willingness for reconciliation at the planned Washington talks, which will see the two leaders brought together after a week's private mediation by U.S. State Department officials.

Pentagon refuses to provide updates on U.S. strikes

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon's spokesman declined to provide updates Tuesday on the results of the U.S. missile strikes in Afghanistan and Sudan last month, saying the administration intends to maintain "a fairly tight clamp" on such information.

Asked how effective the strikes were and whether the government knew the whereabouts of Saudi Islamist Osama Ben Laden in the wake of the hits against his training camps, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon replied, "I'm not prepared to answer any of those questions."

In August, the United States unleashed a barrage of Tomahawk cruise missiles into sites in Afghanistan and Sudan in retaliation for the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa that killed 258 people and wounded thousands.

In Afghanistan, two alleged terrorist training camps were hit Aug. 20, including one believed to have been operated by Ben Laden. A factory in

Sudan also was struck. Officials said it was attacked because of "convincing" evidence it contained a substance used to create deadly VX nerve gas.

At the time, Pentagon officials refused to say how many missiles were used in the strikes, or even which military service conducted them. Let alone how effective they might have been. On Tuesday, Bacon said that stance would continue.

"I think that everybody can appreciate that one aspect of this operation was to retain a fairly tight clamp on information, both... before the operation began and also after the operation took place," the spokesman said.

"There's a strong feeling within this building, and within the administration generally, that in this brave new world of terrorism where we can expect greater challenges from terrorist organizations around the world, that we need to probably say less when we do more." But when asked to clarify questions that

have been raised about assertions made by government officials shortly after the strikes — that Ben Laden had an ownership stake in the Sudan factory and that it did not make medicines — Bacon at first sent questioners elsewhere.

"I think that I should let the intelligence community talk about the intelligence, and I invite you to address those questions to the appropriate people," he said.

The spokesman did confirm a report in the New York Times last week that Defense Secretary William Cohen said he learned three days after the strike that the Sudan factory did produce medicines.

Even so, Bacon insisted the plant "does make EMPMA," a precursor substance for VX nerve gas. On the question of financial ties, he said, "We do believe that there is some financial arrangement between Osama Ben Laden and elements in Sudan, possibly those related to this plant."

Rebel Kurds attack villages despite ceasefire — report

ANKARA (AFP) — Separatist Kurdish rebels have attacked two villages in eastern Turkey, killing one person and injuring three, despite their declaration of a ceasefire of last week, the Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday.

The attacks took place in Tokat province on Tuesday night after which the rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fled, the agency quoted security officials as saying.

In a related development, Turkish troops killed six PKK members in three Tuesday

clashes in the southeastern provinces of Van, Diyarbakir and Batman, government authorities told Anatolia Wednesday.

PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in late August declared an unconditional ceasefire as of September 1 in the 14-year-old war with Turkish government forces, urging Ankara to agree to talks with his group for an end to the country's Kurdish problem.

But Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz swiftly dismissed Ocalan's ceasefire offer, saying the government would never accept the rebel leader as a negotiating partner.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

15:10 Cartoon — Animated Hero Classics
15:30 Cartoon — The Animal Park
16:00 Doc. — L'Etoile des Fars
16:30 Doc. — Blue Water Dreaming
17:00 NBA
18:15 Sliders
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine — L'oeuf De Colombi
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — Family Matters
20:00 The Great Romances
20:30 Drama — Dr. Quinn the Medicine Woman
21:10 Oprah Winfrey
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film — "Manhattan Moonshine"
23:59 Comedy — Can't Hurry Love?
00:30 End of T.X.

Friday Programmes

15:10 Cartoon — The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin
15:30 The Borrowers
16:00 Feature film — "Blood River"
18:15 French quiz show — Les Cles de Fort Boyard
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Allo La Terre
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Comedy — The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 Life on the Digital Edge
20:30 Doc. — The Seven Wonders of the World
21:10 Babylon-5
22:00 News in English

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

22:30 Big Sky (Ep. 4)

23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:52 Fajr
06:11 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:33 Dhuhur
16:06 'Asr
18:54 Maghreb
20:13 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624833/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 477151
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to dip slightly during the week-end with hot weather conditions prevailing and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be hot, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 23/55
Aqaba 27/40
Deserts 20/38
Jordan Valley 26/40

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 38, Aqaba 42
Humidity readings: Amman 20 per cent, Aqaba 26 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 29
Jerash 35
Um Qays 35
Madaba 34
Petra 37
Dead Sea 43

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib 5865456
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shlehan 4752405
Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh 5519220
Dr. Rami Suddar 5866457
Firas pharmacy 5661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 4637055
Nadroukh pharmacy 4623672
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Yacoub pharmacy 4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Amin Abu Tadah 244468
Al Quds pharmacy 4630321
ZARQA:
Dr. Issa Omari 901266
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4620341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Police Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directo-

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdi 56661317
Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 585856
Luzmila 4630195
Khulidi Maternity 46442816
Akileh Maternity 46424112
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 56672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 56641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 47711013
Al-Bashir 477511126
Army, Marka 489161115
Queen Alia Hospital 56024050
Amal Hospital 5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 099983323
Zarqa National Hospital 099900560
Ibn Sina Hospital 099986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 099909990

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:00 Bombay (RJ)
10:00 Surua (RJ)
10:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:20 Bahrain (RJ)
10:25 Beirut (RJ)
10:40 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Colombo (RJ)
13:15 Muscat (add) (RJ)
15:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30 London (RJ)
18:45 Kuwait (RJ)
19:10 Athens (RJ)
19:20 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:45 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital 021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 021272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 021247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 031314111

OTHER FLIGHTS

08:55 Dubai (EK)
11:00 Kuwait (KU)
13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:10 Sharjah (AH)
15:40 Doha (QR)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:00 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:00 Cairo (MS)
21:10 London (BA)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)
00:05 Moscow (SU)
01:15 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
04:20 Tunis (TU)
05:20 Antalya (TK)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:45 Beirut (RJ)
11:35 Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:55 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

12:20 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)

12:45 Kuwait (RJ)

13:10 Paris (RJ)

13:30 Athens (RJ)

13:25 London (RJ)

18:10 Doha (RJ)

20:35 Larnaca (RJ)

21:15 Cairo (RJ)

21:25 Jeddah (RJ)

22:00 Dubai (RJ)

00:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)

Other Flights

06:15 Istanbul (TK)
07:50 Frankfurt (LH)
08:20 London (BA)
09:55 Dubai (EK)
09:55 Damascus, Dubai (RJ)
12:00 Kuwait (KU)
14:30 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Abu Dhabi (GF)
16:00 Annabah, Algiers (AJ)
16:30 Doha (QR)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
22:00 Cairo (MS)
01:30 Moscow (SU)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)
05:20 Beirut, Tunis (TU)

Royal Wings

(For Thursday and Friday)
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:45 Tel Aviv (from QAIA — on Thursday only) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Development should be based on equitable resource distribution — Princess Basma

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — To decrease the ever-growing gap between rich and poor, human development should be based on equitable distribution of shared resources, equity, and social responsibility, said HRH Princess Basma at the launching of the 1998 Human Development Report in Amman on Wednesday.

Princess Basma, United Nations Development Programme human development ambassador, said: "We all have to work on decreasing discrepancies in society in issues such as water and civil rights for both men and women. Human development is a partnership among non-governmental organisations, civil society and government."

The annual report focuses this year on the theme of global consumption and points out that world consumption reached \$24 trillion in 1998.

"The richest 20 per cent of the world's population accounts for 86 per cent of total private consumption. The poorest 20 per cent account for only 1.3 per

cent," said UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan Jorgen Lissner.

The report ranks developing and industrialised countries according to the Human Development Index (HDI), which is based on three socio-economic indicators: life expectancy, adult literacy, and per capita income.

Jordan is classified as a medium human development country, ranking 87 out of 174 countries. "Jordan has shown tremendous progress in life expectancy. Compared to 1960, when the average life expectancy was 55 years, it is now 69," said Planning Minister Nabil Ammari.

The adult literacy indicator shows that 93 per cent of Jordanian males are literate, as opposed to 79 per cent of females.

"The government should put more effort in pushing for an increase in the average literacy rate for both men and women," Ammari told the Jordan Times.

Per capita income in Jordan stands at \$1,600. Ammari explained though that for comparative purposes among countries, the pur-

chasing power parity is used.

"We take the differences in prices between countries. If we were to compare Jordan to the United States using this parity, Jordan's per capita income would amount to \$4,100."

Despite the country's high literacy and life expectancy ratings, Jordan's per capita income continues to be low and has affected its HDI ranking.

Jordan this year dropped three places from last year, with Canada remaining in the lead for the second consecutive year. Bahrain ranked the highest among Arab countries.

"The HDI is subject to fine statistical adjustments in its socio-economic indicators. Jordan's score has barely changed, it is just that two or three other countries have improved more," Lissner said.

According to official statistics, 25 per cent of the Jordanian population lives below the absolute poverty line, with less than 10 per cent living in abject poverty. In response to these figures, the government has been implementing the Social

Productivity Programme to fight poverty and unemployment.

"The first phase focuses on alleviating poverty through assistance under the National Aid Fund, rehabilitating the unemployed poor, and extending loans," Ammari said.

The causes of poverty are addressed by enhancing the productivity of the poor through education, health, infrastructure, technology, micro-finance, and good governance, the minister added.

The report adds that 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. It warns that availability of goods and services in the past three decades have simultaneously resulted in historic gains in human development and dangerous threats.

The Human Development Report 1998 recommended a guarantee of minimum consumption rights for all. A call was made for more social responsibility towards sustainable consumption, and a change in negative consumption attitudes and trends which were seen to be at the expense of the poor.

United Nations fund grants Jordan \$800,000 for population projects

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Wednesday signed two agreements with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) under which the Kingdom will receive \$800,000 in aid to promote population projects.

The grant is part of UNFPA assistance worth a total of \$4 million for the years 1998 through 2002.

One of the agreements will support programmes under the National Population Strat-

egy while the other will support government programmes in population-related fields.

According to Abdul Razzaq Bani Hani, Planning Ministry secretary general, who signed the agreements on behalf of Jordan, the two agreements will provide assistance to a total of four projects being carried out by the Lower House's Population and Development Committee, the National Population Commit-

tee, Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre and the Information Ministry.

Representatives of these institutions attended the signing ceremony along with UNFPA representatives.

Bani Hani said these programmes are designed to help implement the National Population Strategy, which aims at reducing the rate of population growth, dealing with the problem of poverty, tackling the effects of population

growth on economic and social development as well as the environment and natural resources, and enhancing services in the field of reproductive health.

The UNFPA has since 1976 granted Jordan \$16 million which financed projects connected with population issues, education, and production of radio and television programmes dealing with population and development questions.



PRINCE FIRAS MEETS WITH IRBID GROUPS: HRH Prince Firas Ben Ra'd, His Majesty King Hussein's adviser for health affairs, meets with representatives of voluntary and social committees in Irbid. Prince Firas assured Irbid residents of King Hussein's good health and said he finished the third session of medical treatment. Prince Firas added that the needy should be accorded distinguished care (Petra photo)

Srour voices Jordan's support for Islamic parliamentary union

MOSCOW (Petra) — The speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Sa'd Hayel Srour, Wednesday met with the chairperson of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), Miguel Martinez, to discuss the union's next meeting in Jordan in the year 2000.

Srour, currently attending the IPU meetings in Moscow, said he and Martinez also discussed ways of encouraging the union to contribute to the ongoing efforts to reach a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. They also discussed urging delegations to press their respective nations to stimulate economic and technical cooperation between rich and poor countries.

Earlier Wednesday, Srour announced Jordan's support for the establishment of an Islamic parliamentary union in order to enhance cooperation between parliaments of Islamic countries.

Srour announced Jordan's stand at an unofficial meeting by Islamic parliamentary delegations attending the Moscow conference to review the topics on the agenda.

According to Srour, a number of Islamic parliaments have already set up a committee to develop a draft statute for such a union.

He added that the committee is due to hold a meeting in Tehran later this year to pave the way for practical steps to establish the projected union.

UNRWA advisory council to review draft report

AMMAN (J.T.) — The

Advisory Council of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency will hold a meeting in Amman on Sept. 28 to review a draft report to be submitted to the U.N. General Assembly later this year by the agency's Commissioner General Peter Hansen.

Hansen is also expected to submit a report on his efforts to secure sufficient funding for UNRWA, which provides education, health and social services to Palestinian refugees in its fields of operations in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

At present, UNRWA faces a \$65 million deficit in its \$314 million budget for this year.

The agency's advisory council groups Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, France, Turkey, Britain, Belgium, the U.S. and Japan, in addition to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

In 1997, UNRWA received about \$260 million out of a \$312 million budget in contributions from donor countries, according to agency sources. Since 1992, the agency has run short in donor contributions to cover its budget, thus forcing it to adopt cost reduction measures including

suspending teacher recruitment, cancelling hospitalisation programmes and reducing international staff by 15 per cent, they added.

UNRWA workers in August announced plans to stage a one-day strike this month to protest what they said was the agency's failure to heed their demands for better working conditions and pay increases.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the committees representing the various sectors of employees working for the agency are also seeking better working conditions, an end to the freeze on appointments and better employment termination benefits.

Petra quoted UNRWA sources Tuesday as saying that Hansen plans to meet with the representatives of these committees in Amman on Sept. 23 and that the meeting has been arranged by Palestinian Affairs Department Director Ibrahim Badran.

UNRWA, which was set up after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war to offer basic educational and health services to refugees, currently employs some 22,000 people. More than 6,000 of these work in Jordan, which hosts an estimated 1.2 million refugees, almost 40 per cent of the total number.

Jordanian, Palestinian officials discuss bilateral agriculture agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Palestinian meeting Wednesday discussed means of developing the bilateral agricultural agenda into a full-fledged agreement and the foundation of Palestinian agricultural legislation.

Underlining the uniqueness of Jordan-Palestine relations through the role of common interests and shared goals, Agriculture Minister Mijhem Khreisha and his Palestinian counterpart Hikmat Zeid discussed the two countries' agenda and ways of turning it into an agreement.

Khreisha said the ministry would provide the Palestinian side with Jordanian technical experience, as recommended by His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to help develop their own agricultural legislation.

Discussion also covered

the issue of certificates of origin for Palestinian agricultural produce passing through Jordan to other Arab markets.

Meanwhile, both sides agreed to hold a trilateral meeting to be attended by specialists from Jordan, Palestine and Israel to define a mechanism to implement agricultural agreements signed by the three sides and facilitate commercial exchanges of agricultural products between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority.

Attending the meeting were Agriculture Ministry Secretary General Hashem Shoul, Agricultural Marketing Cooperation General Manager Salem Lawzi, Palestinian envoy to Jordan Omar Khaib and officials from both ministries in Jordan and Palestine.

Zeid invited Khreisha to visit the Palestinian territories.

State universities to admit 454 community college graduates

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's state-run universities will admit 454 community college graduates to allow them to continue their higher education during 1998-1999 academic year, an official said Wednesday.

Walid Maani, head of the Coordination and Admissions Committee for Universities, told a press conference that the acceptance of the community college graduates was in line with a government-sponsored policy enabling excellent students to continue studies in specialisations in market demand.

The 454 students are in addition to the 18,000 students who will enrol at state universities this year, Maani said.

Maani added that a total of 2,389 community college students, including 395 who graduated this year, applied for seats at state universities.

The universities reserved 750 seats for them, but the committee only chose the 454 who met the set requirements. These included 377 community college graduates from this year and 77 from previous years, he added.

Giving a breakdown of the figures, Maani said

the University of Jordan will admit 104; Yarmouk University in Irbid, 82; Muta University in Karak, 74; Jordan University for Science and Technology in Ramtha, 27; Al Hashemieh University in Zarqa, 38; Al al Bayt University in Mafraq, 32; and Balqa Applied University in Salt, 97.

Maani, who is also acting president of the University of Jordan, said UJ will start registering the selected students on Saturday. He added that the remaining students can contact the other universities to register.

Traffic regulations having little impact on costly accident toll

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Two Jordanian women waiting at a bus stop on their way to a wedding died after being hit by a fuel tanker with failed brakes in the southern town of Tafilaith this week.

Five men and two children were injured in the same horrific incident, reminiscent of thousands of tragic road accidents that continue to take the lives of innocent civilians in a country of 4.2 million people.

One of the children lost both his legs.

"Every time I get back to my home safely, my parents congratulate me," said U.S.-educated engineer Sahel Madi, 33, echoing rising popular concern over road safety in Jordan. "Driving in Amman, especially in summer, has become a real nightmare."

In the first six months of this year, 270 people were killed and 7,000 were injured in 19,000 road accidents across Jordan.

A recent Traffic Department survey showed that in 83.2 per cent of road accidents involving pedestrians, the drivers are at fault.

Most accidents occur because motorists ignore traffic rules, exceed speed limits, drive under the influence of alcohol and in the case of the generally poorly-maintained public vehicle drivers, work long hours, the survey said.

Decades of nationwide public and private efforts to crack down on soaring traffic-related accidents appear to have failed, mainly because of weak traffic legislation, badly-designed roads and intersections and motorists' lack of respect for traffic rules, officials and traffic safety experts say.

The country's rapid population growth, coupled with an increase in the number of vehicles on the road after the 1973 economic boom, has not matched city planning schemes and the development of the road network, they added.

In addition, the occasional discrimination in implementing laws vis-a-vis violators and the relatively low fines given to violators committing serious offences such as running red lights (JD50) are other reasons behind increasing road accidents.

"There is a traffic law and punishments for violators," said Mohammad Dabbas, president of the Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents.

"But preventive measures, such as imposing higher fines against traffic violations and fining all violators without regard to their status and position, are not being implemented properly by the Traffic Department," Dabbas told the Jordan Times.

"If the law is implemented properly, people will think twice before committing a traffic violation," added Dabbas, a member of the society for over 20 years.

He claimed that "certain people" intentionally violated traffic laws "because they come from well-known families or are rich and can afford paying the price of the ticket."

Dabbas also criticised many traffic educators for failing to respect laws. "They should be role models. Instead, I notice that they often violate traffic rules."

Ironically, Dabbas said Jordanians driving in the West respect their laws, but "violated them when they return home."

In response to popular com-

plaints of reckless driving and wrongful overtaking by many drivers of small public buses, authorities last year began installing plainclothes traffic police on most trips in a bid to rein in the drivers.

"Many times, these officers fine drivers for the way they are driving or if they are taking more passengers than authorised," said Ibrahim Salhi, who frequently uses

Adding to the bleak picture are figures showing that advanced nations lose one citizen in road accidents for every 10,000 vehicles, while Jordan loses 16 citizens annually for a similar number of vehicles

public buses plying the Amman-Zarqa highway, locally-dubbed "death highway."

Official figures for 1997 showed that public transport buses were responsible for 35 per cent of a total of 39,000 road accidents in Jordan.

A total of 557 people died in accidents in 1997, up from 552 in 1996.

In addition to the human losses, officials estimate that Jordan annually incurs JD100 million in material losses from road accidents — corresponding to 2.9 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. The figure is expected to increase to JD150 million by the year 2000.

Adding to the bleak picture are figures showing that advanced

nations lose one citizen in road accidents for every 10,000 vehicles, while Jordan loses 16 citizens annually for a similar number of vehicles.

Officials say it is too early to say if a five-month-old point system for traffic violators has helped reduce the road accidents problem. Under the regulations introduced in April, points are accrued against motorists for every major offence such as failing to stop at a traffic light or driving a car without a valid licence.

The points are kept in individual files, and when drivers accumulate 11 points, they are sent to a rehabilitation course at the state-run driving school. If they reach 12 points, their licences are revoked for two months.

A new traffic law that includes tougher fines for offenders and bans people from using mobile phones while driving and from blocking roads during wedding and graduation processions is expected to be discussed by Parliament when it reconvenes in its ordinary session later this year.

Parliament will also look into a draft law to establish a higher traffic council to supervise the implementation of national road safety strategies that have been undermined by lack of public coordination.

"There are dispersed efforts by several parties concerning road safety and there is an urgent need for a higher traffic council to organise these efforts," Lieutenant Colonel Jamil Salim, director of the Traffic Institute, told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

The council, which will enjoy administrative and financial independence, will include representa-

tives from the ministries of interior, transport, public works, planning, health, and municipal and rural affairs as well as the Greater Amman Municipality.

It will suggest ways to improve the traffic system and help solve its various problems. The council will rely on contributions and grants as well as a 10 per cent revenue from the total amount of collected traffic fines and some of the sales tax charged by insurance companies.

Last year traffic police issued 982,347 tickets. In only the first six months of 1998, they issued 632,171.

Stress caused by popular over-ridding concerns with day-to-day needs, rising unemployment, poverty and lack of prospects for an end to regional political tensions are also reasons behind rising traffic-related problems, officials and road safety experts say.

Sadly, 90.9 per cent of the victims of car accidents during 1996 were children below 15 years of age, followed by youths between 16 and 20.

Officials and experts attribute this phenomenon to the fact that most schools are built on main streets, lack of public playgrounds for children as well as school programmes to raise their awareness regarding road safety.

"The Traffic Department is exerting its utmost effort to cover all streets in Jordan and to monitor motorists in an effort to minimise the losses," said Col. Jamil.

"But the responsibility to raise awareness concerning traffic safety falls on everyone in the community, and the private and public sectors have to cooperate on that," he added.

what's going on

13TH ITALIAN FILM WEEK

* Two films entitled "Isotta" and "Festival" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively.
* Two films entitled "Festival" and "Il grande cocomero" (The Great Pumpkin) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday Sept. 12, at 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. respectively.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography exhibition entitled "Les Cite's d'Artistes a Paris" at the premises of the Association of the Jordanian Plastic Artists, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 30.
* Paintings by Iraqi artists Ismail Sheikhly, Suzanne Sheikhly, and Khalid Qasab entitled "Pioneers of the Fifth" at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Sept. 21 (Tel. 5526932).
* Paintings by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.
* Exhibition of wrought iron furniture by Jordanian artist Salim Al Bandak at Al Baider Hall, Kam Zaman village (Tel. 5862531), until Sept. 17.

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL

"Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:
* Film entitled "Jackson Pollock (1912-1956)" on Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hani at the Main House.
* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.
* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.
* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'sh at the Museum.

Other Flights
06:15 Amman to Chicago (RW)
07:45 Amman to Paris (RW)
08:20 Amman to Athens (RW)
09:55 Amman to London (RW)
12:00 Amman to Dubai (RW)
14:30 Amman to Riyadh (RW)
15:00 Amman to Abu Dhabi (RW)
16:30 Amman to Algiers (RW)
20:00 Amman to Beirut (RW)
21:10 Amman to Tel Aviv (RW)
22:00 Amman to Cairo (RW)
01:30 Amman to Amsterdam (RW)
02:15 Amman to Berlin (RW)
05:20 Amman to Tunis (RW)

Royal Wings
(For Thursday and Friday)
08:00 Amman to Manila (RW)
09:30 Amman to Manila (RW)
20:45 Amman to Manila (RW)
21:30 Amman to Manila (RW)

Yeltsin meets PM front-runners

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin summoned two of the men in the running to be Russia's next prime minister Wednesday as he agonised over whom to nominate for a decisive vote in parliament.

Yeltsin remained silent in public before one of the most important decisions of his long political career, but must have been heartened by an unexpected rise in the value of the rouble after weeks of decline during a deep economic crisis.

The president held talks at his Gorky-9 residence outside Moscow with acting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and acting Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov but did not say in public whether he had settled on either.

Chernomyrdin has been rejected as prime minister twice by the State Duma lower house of parliament. Yeltsin can renominate him or name a compromise candidate for the final vote, but another defeat would force him to dissolve the chamber.

"The president has not yet sent the [nomination] letter to the State Duma," a Kremlin spokesman said by telephone shortly before 2 p.m. (1000 GMT). He declined to say whether Yeltsin had reached a final decision.

Chernomyrdin, 60, was initially proposed by Yeltsin after he sacked young prime minister Sergei Kiriyenko on Aug. 23 for failing to end months of financial turmoil in the world's largest country and second nuclear power.

Primakov, a 68-year-old former spy master, is one of five alternative candidates proposed by the Communist opposition even though he says he does not want to be prime minister.

Yeltsin's refusal to announce



An elderly Communist man collects signatures Wednesday in Krasnoyarsk from Russians who want President Boris Yeltsin impeached. Yeltsin kept Russia's parliament waiting on Wednesday for his nomination of prime minister to face a decisive vote in the lower house (Reuters photo)

his decision, nearly 48 hours after the Duma's second rejection of Chernomyrdin, is a rare sign of uncertainty by a politician who is normally decisive and often impulsive.

His options are receding fast. Alexander Lebed, a possible alternative choice, ruled himself out of the running for the premiership, as have most of the other candidates.

But the former Kremlin security adviser who is now governor of the Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia, hinted at higher ambitions by saying he would "take responsibility" for Russia if the crisis deepened and urging Yeltsin to quit.

"I expect an early [presidential] election... It would be the ideal outcome for all, including the president," he told reporters after flying to Moscow unexpectedly for

talks with other regional leaders.

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and Yegor Stroyev, head of the upper house of parliament, also say they are not interested although analysts say Luzhkov's comments may be a smokescreen.

Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, whose party is the dominant force in the Duma, hopes Yeltsin will compromise to avert the risk of civil unrest if the Duma is dissolved.

Yeltsin has already offered concessions by agreeing to bring parliament into consultations on forming the government, a move demonstrating how much the crisis has weakened his authority.

But Zyuganov wants the 67-year-old Kremlin chief to resign. "The situation is extremely

dangerous," he said. "It is the most dangerous situation we have had since World War II."

Asked if he would lead an uprising, Zyuganov told reporters: "I do not want an uprising, but if there are organised protests, we will certainly lead them."

The crisis and the possibility of social upheaval have prompted concern beyond Russia's borders, with Britain inviting senior officials from the Group of Seven industrialised nations to discuss the matter in London, probably next week.

Interfax news agency said Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura is expected to visit Moscow Sunday for talks with Primakov on the financial and economic crisis as well as bilateral relations.

Serbian police, KLA guerrillas clash in northwest Kosovo

PRISTINA (AP) — Police battled independence-minded Albanian militants Wednesday at a gold and zinc mine in Kosovo, in a rare instance of fighting in the Serbian province's northwest.

The Tanjug news agency of Yugoslavia said fighting began after members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) attacked police and guards at the Stari Trg mine, about 30 kilometres northwest of Pristina, Kosovo's capital. Tanjug said a mine employee was killed.

Aid workers have warned of an increasing humanitarian disaster in Kosovo, a southern province in the Balkans, one of the two republics that make up Yugoslavia. Hundreds of people — most of them ethnic Albanian — have been killed in the six-month crackdown on the separatist KLA and more than 265,000 others have been forced to flee their shelled and burned-out villages.

The Serbs, for their part, have accused the militants of massacring Serbian civilians in at least two cases.

Kosovo's population is 90 per cent ethnic Albanians, most of them supportive of the KLA's armed struggle for independence after decades of repression by Serbian authorities.

Much of the fighting of recent weeks has been to the southwest of Pristina, with Serbian police and the Yugoslav army teaming up to push KLA fighters out of their strongholds there.

With the area around Stari Trg also a guerrilla pocket, it was possible that a similar gov-

ernment offensive had been ordered in that region.

The Kosovo Information Centre, which is close to the province's ethnic Albanian leadership, said strong detonations could be heard in Kosovska Mitrovica town, and at Podujevo, further east.

Seeking to back up their newest allegations, police Tuesday showed reporters and international observers bodies of some alleged victims near the rebel stronghold of Glogjane, where they claimed some 40 Serb civilians were executed. They said they knew of more similar execution sites in the area, about 60 kilometres southwest of Pristina.

Reporters saw seven decomposed bodies, one beheaded and another missing limbs, lying on the ground under a heavy rain.

Police said the bodies were those of Serb civilians. No more bodies could be immediately seen — despite police claims there were others — and no details on the victims were available.

Police have reported about 170 Serbs missing in Kosovo since fighting started in early March. They claim the rebels kidnapped them. Earlier this month, police showed charred remains of what they said were burned bodies of Serb civilians in another former KLA stronghold.

Wednesday, the government-run Politika daily in Belgrade said preliminary investigations of those alleged killings, in Klecka village, showed 10 people were burned there, including two children, aged 8 and 12.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council to observe Bosnian elections

PARIS (R) — The Strasbourg-based Council of Europe said Wednesday it would send representatives to monitor elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina this weekend. The Council's Parliamentary Assembly will monitor the general election while its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) will monitor polling in sensitive areas such as Brcko, Banja Luka and Mostar. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will oversee Bosnia's second general elections since the end of the 43-month war. The 1995 Dayton Peace Accord, which ended the ethnic conflict, created a single Bosnian state divided into a Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb republic. In the elections on Sept. 12 and 13, Bosnians will choose members of the three-man state presidency. They will also elect deputies for the state parliament and the two entities' assemblies, as well as a president in the Serb entity. The observation's results will be included in a report on regional and local self-government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A CLRAE recommendation will then be made to the Parliamentary Assembly as part of the country's bid to join the 40-member Council of Europe.

Irish police hold suspect under new law

DUBLIN (R) — An Irish guerrilla suspect was being held Wednesday in the first application of a tough new security law designed to crush groups like the "Real IRA." Irish police said they had detained a man near the Irish border in County Monaghan using an amended version of the offences against the state act, which was rushed through following a deadly bomb in Northern Ireland last month planted by the Real IRA. They declined to say which guerrilla group the man in custody was suspected of belonging to. The new law, so harsh it has been slammed by civil rights groups, allows a senior police officer to extend a detention period with a district court's approval.

Earthquake in Italy kills at least one

ROME (AP) — An earthquake shook the mountain towns of southern Italy Wednesday, killing at least one person who was hit by falling rocks. Panicked residents fled into the streets in towns close to the quake's epicentre. It was based between the communities of Castelluccio Inferiore and Laino Borgo, where the regions of Calabria and Basilicata meet, about 350 kilometres southeast of Rome. The victim was hit by rocks near where he had parked his car. Authorities said there was some damage to buildings, mainly older ones. The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 5.5 according to the National Institute of Geophysics. A year ago, a series of earthquakes struck the central region of Umbria, killing 10 people and damaging century-old churches and artwork, including the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

Russia to pay nuclear workers' back wages

MOSCOW (AP) — The government plans to allocate 317 million rubles before the end of the month to pay back wages to nuclear industry workers, who have warned that the lack of funding threatens nuclear safety. Acting Finance Minister Mikhail Zadornov and the vice chairman of the Atomic Energy Workers' union, Vladimir Kashkin, signed an agreement Wednesday for transferring the funds to the Atomic Energy Ministry, the Interfax news agency reported. But the money, worth about \$16 million at the current exchange rate, is only about half of the federal government's wage debt to nuclear industry workers. The document signed by Zadornov and Kashkin estimates the total wage debt at 580 million rubles. Interfax reported. Nuclear workers from across the country began a three-day protest in Moscow Tuesday, demanding that the government pay its bills for back wages and old orders. Trade union leaders said that the failure to pay threatens the safety of Russia's huge network of nuclear centres.

More Myanmar opposition arrests

YANGON (AFP) — Myanmar's opposition said Wednesday the military had arrested 108 more of its members and that it had called for a meeting with the junta to address the issue. Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party said in a statement the latest arrests brought the number of party members detained since Sunday to 328. "These are innocent people who have not broken any laws and the NLD, which condemns these unlawful arrests, urges the government to desist and release them," the statement said. It said eight of those arrested in the past 24 hours were members of parliament elected in 1990 polls won by a landslide by the NLD-led political opposition.

Glasgow to decide fate of Sioux shirt

LONDON (R) — The people of Glasgow are to decide whether to send home to the United States a blood-stained shirt taken from a Sioux Indian warrior killed by the U.S. Cavalry in the massacre of Wounded Knee over a hundred years ago. Glasgow City Council said Wednesday it would ask residents of the Scottish city to decide the fate of the "ghost shirt," acquired by a museum there in 1892 from a member of Buffalo Bill Cody's travelling Wild West Show. Descendants of the Sioux warriors killed at Wounded Knee by the U.S. Cavalry want the shirt returned to South Dakota, where they say it belongs. The Glasgow council will hold a public meeting on Nov. 13 to debate whether to return the shirt and representatives of the Lakota Sioux Indians who claim it will attend the hearing to make their case. The Lakota Sioux learned of the existence of the tattered and feathered shirt four years ago when native American lawyer John Earl saw it hanging in an exhibition at the museum while he was on holiday in Scotland. "When I first saw it my heart stopped. It is of a value that is very difficult to communicate to someone who is not a native American. It should not be in Glasgow," Earl told Britain's Daily Telegraph newspaper.

India to buy 10 more Russian fighter jets

MOSCOW (AP) — India plans to buy 10 more Russian Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets in a contract worth about \$350 million, a news agency reported Wednesday. Under a current military agreement, the two countries are developing anti-tactical ballistic missile systems as well as upgrading MiG-21 fighters and T-72 tanks that India already possesses. The purchase of the Sukhoi-30MKI jets is part of an agreement concluded in 1996 under which India agreed to purchase at least 40 Russian military jets before 2002, the Interfax news agency said. Russian officials hope that a licensing agreement with India will lead to the production of at least 100 military aircraft for India, the agency said.

ALF claims arson attacks on McDonald's

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) has claimed responsibility for a recent spate of arson attacks on Belgian fast-food restaurants. Six McDonald's and two Quick outlets in and around Antwerp have been the subject of attacks in the last two months. The most serious incident resulted in the total destruction of a McDonald's outlet in the town of Puurs. None of the attacks have resulted in any injuries. The ALF, a militant direct-action group which last month "liberated" 6,000 mink from a fur farm in England, claimed responsibility for the attacks through radical Dutch magazine Rage.

DR Congo rebel leader says peace talks useless if uninvited

GOMA (AFP) — A political leader of rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) indicated Wednesday that any peace talks would be useless if his movement was excluded from a ceasefire meeting Thursday.

In rebel-held Goma, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba told AFP ahead of a scheduled meeting of officials from President Laurent Kabila's regime and other concerned countries that "if the rebels are not there, a ceasefire is a theoretical matter."

The meeting of defence ministers from six countries, who agreed Tuesday to a ceasefire in the DRC, is due to take place at the Addis Ababa headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), but the rebels have pledged to go on fighting to overthrow Kabila.

"There can be no ceasefire without direct negotiations," said Wamba dia Wamba, the president of the rebel's political wing, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), declaring that his side must see Kabila.

"We want to meet him," added Wamba dia Wamba, but he stressed that the main aim of

the rebels was still to see Kabila removed from power, which he seized in May last year, ousting dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, with help then from ethnic Tutsis in the former Zaire.

The RCD has received no invitation to the meeting of ministers from the DRC, its allies Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the countries Kinshasa accuses of invading the country, Uganda and Tutsi-dominated Rwanda.

The OAU gathering — to which U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has said he will send military advisors — follows talks at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe at which the six concerned heads of state agreed to a ceasefire.

The announced purpose of Thursday's meeting was to discuss the means of implementing the truce.

The rebels sent a team to the Zimbabwe summit Monday and Tuesday, but it was sidelined by heads of state, kept out of the joint sessions and able only to put its case to Zambia's President Frederick Chiluba and OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim.

Chiluba, who chaired the talks in what was presented as a "neutral" capacity, said that the rebels had agreed to a ceasefire and expressed hopes that they would abide by it, but Kabila's snubbed foes stated that they would pursue their military campaign.

In the largest city under rebel control, Kisangani, their military chief Jean-Pierre Ondekane late Tuesday said, "We are launching operations everywhere — we are continuing the offensive."

Kisangani, in the east, is the vast DRC's third biggest city. Rebels are installed there and in the North and South Kivu provinces bordering on Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, but Kabila and his allies have fought off an offensive against Kinshasa and in the southwest Bas-Congo province on the frontier with Angola's oil territories.

Government forces also hold almost all of the mineral-rich province of Katanga in the southeast and have launched air raids against rebel positions at Kalemie and elsewhere in the north of that territory.

German cabinet meets for last time before elections

BONN (AFP) — Germany's cabinet met Wednesday for the last time before elections in less than three weeks, as Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his challenger Gerhard Schroeder hotfooted around the country on the campaign trail.

If opinion polls are anything to go by, it was also the last cabinet under Kohl, with the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) and chancellor candidate Schroeder tipped to take power after the vote on Sept. 27.

The agenda — public works contracts to firms in the east of Germany and reports on the imminent single European currency — scarcely mattered.

Instead, all eyes are focused on the election, in which Kohl is battling to save his job after 16 years in office. He is seeking a record fifth term.

He and Schroeder are crisscrossing the country seeking to sway the hearts and minds of the German electorate.

Tuesday evening, Kohl was in the economically depressed east, braving the whistles of many in the crowd at Weimar to defend his record on jobs and reunification.

Wednesday, after the cabinet session, he was heading to Bavaria, the fiefdom of the Christian Social Union (CSU), sister party to his Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

Schroeder for his part was in Bavaria late Tuesday, and Wednesday was to take his campaign in the opposite direction to Schwerin in the east.

"We have experienced two world wars and two dictatorships, one brown and one red," Kohl told the crowd in Weimar, referring to the Nazi era and the Communist system that ruled much of eastern Europe including the former East Germany.

Germany was finally reunited in 1990, he added to



German Chancellor Helmut Kohl draws back his chair Wednesday prior to the session of the German cabinet in Bonn. It was the cabinet's last session ahead of the German general elections on September 27, during which the ministers council discussed relationships to the European Central Bank (AFP photo)

applause that failed to totally stifle cries of "Get out" and "That's enough!" After winning 1994 legislative elections on the back of the reunification and promises of better times ahead, people in the region are angry at Kohl's record since then.

Unemployment in the east last month was an average 17 per cent, compared to 9.1 per cent in the economically more important west.

Kohl had hoped to make recent improvements in the jobs rate one of his major campaign themes, but the number of people looking for work remains well above the psychologically negative four-

million mark.

Figures for August brought the overall national jobless rate down to 10.6 per cent, but this looks like not enough for the breakthrough the chancellor had hoped would boost his campaign.

He lags three to six per cent behind Schroeder in opinion polls, although that is much better than the 10 per cent margin from earlier this year, and the distance between could diminish further as the ballot draws nearer.

Schroeder, at a rally in Munich late Tuesday, campaigned on his usual themes, lambasting Kohl's record and saying it was time he went

denounced Carlos as a megalomaniac and murderer.

The BKA, who lost trace of him in 1975, stepped up their efforts to track him down again late last year and found evidence to suggest he had lived in Mediterranean and Benelux countries, and later in France as a German journalist.

Klein was arrested in a bistro, the BKA said. He had no personal documents on him, but when asked he said he was indeed "Herr Klein."

First lawsuit filed in New York over Swissair crash

NEW YORK (R) — The first lawsuit over last week's Swissair crash that killed 229 people was filed Wednesday by boxer Jake La Motta in federal court in Brooklyn, lawyers said.

Defendants in the suit include Swissair and Delta Airlines, McDonnell Douglas, which manufactured the MD-11 plane, and Boeing Co., which now owns McDonnell Douglas.

The New York law firm of Baumeister & Samuels filed the suit on behalf of La Motta, whose son Joseph was killed in the crash. Aviation lawyers told Reuters last week they expected litigation in New York.

The suit alleges that the crash was caused by "electrical, mechanical and/or structural failure."

Officials have not yet determined the cause of the crash, but Canadian investigators

Tuesday said that a catastrophic electrical failure could have occurred aboard the jet just minutes before it plunged into the Atlantic Ocean off Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia last Wednesday night.

The investigators said they observed signs of heat stress on small fragments of the cockpit recovered from the crash site. The pilot of Swissair Flight 111 reported smoke in the cabin shortly before crash.

Carol's most spectacular attack — the 1975 kidnapping of OPEC oil ministers in Vienna in which three people were killed.

An Austrian Justice Ministry official told Reuters that Vienna would also apply for Klein's extradition, but could not yet say what the charges would be.

Klein suffered a serious stomach wound in the kidnapping of the OPEC oil ministers, but was treated and then allowed to fly to Algiers with Carlos, his other accomplices and their

hostages. He was then believed to have taken refuge in Libya.

Three years later Klein announced he had become frightened by Carlos's ruthlessness. He defected from the guerrilla group and, in a dramatic parting gesture, sent his pistol and ammunition to the German magazine Der Spiegel along with details of other planned assassinations.

In a book published in Germany entitled "Return to Humanity," Klein later repudiated his own actions and

Germany to seek extradition of Carlos accomplice

BONN (R) — Prosecutors said Wednesday that Germany would request the extradition from France of Hans-Joachim Klein, a former accomplice of guerrilla mastermind Carlos the Jackal in the 1970s.

Klein, 50, who is wanted on charges of murder and kidnapping and is also sought by Austria, was arrested in northern France Tuesday after being on the run for more than 20 years.

He was detained by an anti-terrorist squad near the Normandy village of

Sainte-Honore-La-Guilleville, where he had been living under an assumed name for years.

Frankfurt Prosecutor Job Tillmann said the justice ministry in the central state of Hesse planned to file the extradition request to prosecutors in France.

Germany's Federal Office for Criminal Investigation (BKA) said in a statement that Klein had been tracked down in a joint operation by French and German police.

Prosecutors say Klein took part in

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World
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N. Korea marks anniversary with military parade

SEOUL (AP) — North Korea marked the 50th anniversary of its founding Wednesday with leader Kim Jong Il viewing a massive military parade in the capital, the official news media reported.

Columns of Korean People's Army units and military academy cadets goose-stepped before Kim, "vowing to become rifles and grenades to defend Great Leader Comrade Kim Jong Il," the official Pyongyang Radio said.

The dispatch, monitored by Seoul's Naewoo Press, did not report the number of soldiers who took part in the parade. No sophisticated weapons were displayed.

Kim, 56, is ruling North Korea as chairman of its National Defence Commission, which is in charge of the 1.1 million-strong military, the world's fifth largest and backbone of the belligerent, Marxist country.

North Korean television footage, carried by South Korean TV stations later Wednesday, showed Kim standing solemnly on the platform and clapping as the crowd burst with a frenzy of cheers. Kim did not speak.

Pyongyang's main plaza, named after Kim's late father, long-time President Kim Il Sung, was filled with red flags and slogans and placards vowing loyalty to the junior Kim and celebrating what the North called the launch of its first satellite.

North Korea says it launched the satellite Aug. 31. But U.S. and Japanese defence officials believed the launch was the test-firing of a ballistic missile that sailed over northern Japan and crashed into the Pacific Ocean.

Whether a missile or satellite, analysts said, it showed a worrisome increase in North Korea's missile capability.

The launch was "a powerful demonstration of the iron will of the party, the people and armed forces to build the People's Republic of Korea into a strong and great country," Gen. Kim Yong Chun, chief of the military's general staff, was quoted as saying in a speech before the parade.

Saturday, North Korea's parliament amended its constitution to make the National Defence Commission chairman — a post held by the junior Kim since 1993 — its highest state post.

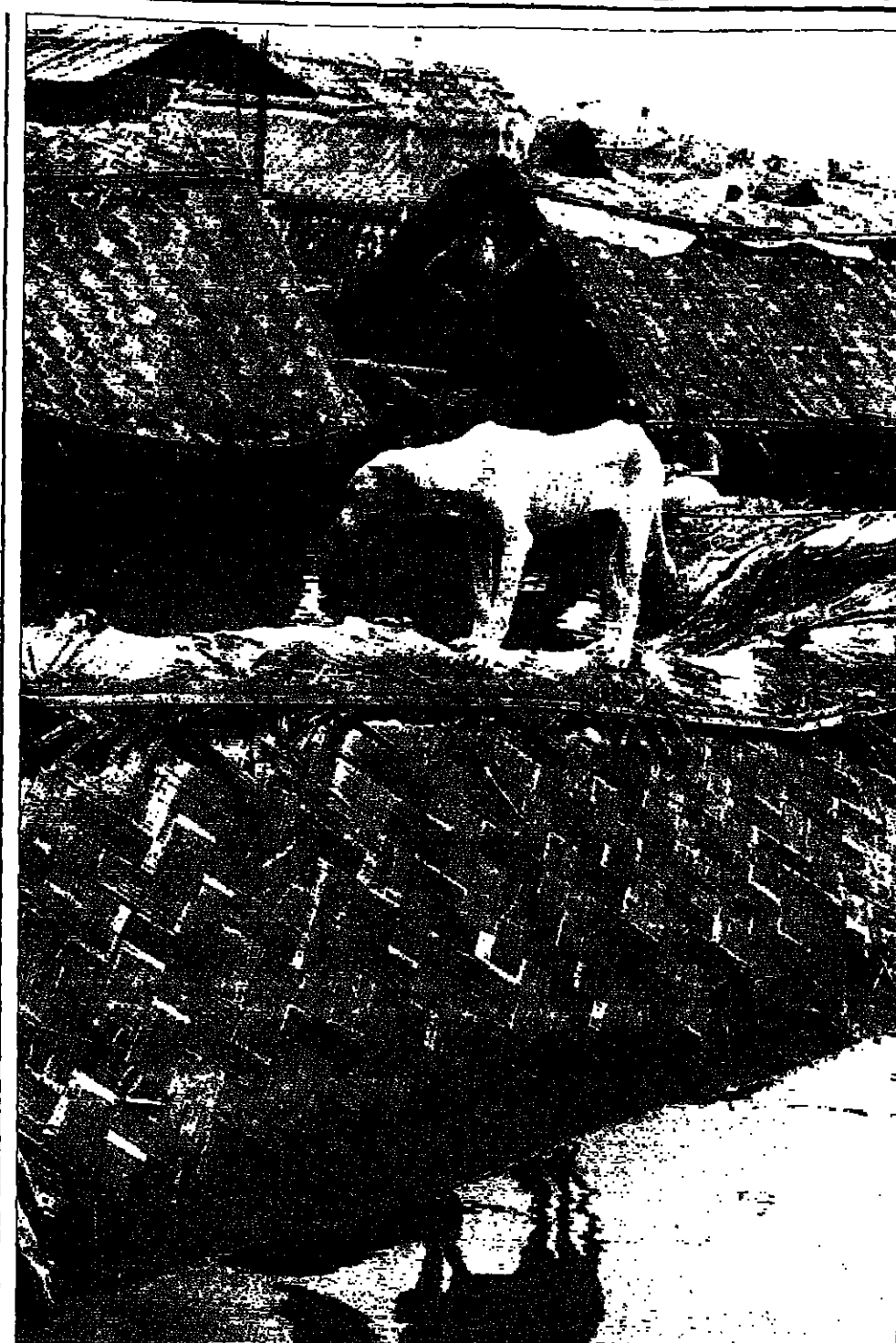
The previous top post, state president, was abolished. That completed a long process to enthrone the junior Kim as a full-fledged leader of North Korea. It was the Communist world's first hereditary transfer of power.

S. Korea says will keep tough security law

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung said Wednesday he was not considering revising the country's National Security Law at present because of threats from Communist North Korea.

A presidential statement quoted Kim — who was himself once imprisoned under the law — as saying during a meeting with visiting Amnesty International Secretary General Pierre Sané that the law was still needed.

"North Korea views [its



Bangladeshi children and a dog perch Wednesday on the roof of their house submerged in floodwaters in a Dhaka suburb. The floods have inundated three-quarters of the country and so far killed 770 people (Reuters photo)

Dhaka on alert as floods threaten major dykes

DHAKA (AFP) — The Bangladeshi capital was under siege from floodwaters Wednesday as dykes protecting millions of people from inundation threatened to crumble, officials said.

Dhaka's nine million residents were on official alert while forecasters said worse could be in store in what was described as the country's most devastating floods this century.

The death toll neared 800 Wednesday and up to 30 million have been left homeless in more than two months of flooding which have inundated two-thirds of the country. Major roads to Dhaka have been cut.

State radio said a dyke protecting the district of Tangail, 70 kilometres north of Dhaka, had partially collapsed and flooded an undetermined number of homes.

A major embankment to the southeast of the city was under threat despite the efforts of soldiers and engineers to reinforce it.

Tens of thousands of panic-stricken residents passed a sleepless night Tuesday, many of them helping soldiers and engineers plug breaches to the

major Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) dyke. Officials said most people returned to their homes drenched in rain and mud Wednesday but added that the situation was under control.

"People have gone home. I could not sleep last night myself but, God willing, pressure on the dyke has not increased as the Buriganga River remained static despite non-stop rain," an official of the embankment control room told AFP.

To the northwest, the Dhaka Protection Embankment was also threatened, leaving the main international airport at risk of inundation.

Trains from the capital to the main port of Chittagong were still running but officials warned the line could close at any time with significant danger of flooding at more than a dozen points.

The government has been sending aid by boats and helicopters, with more supplies expected to be moved with the help of U.S. forces Thursday.

Environmental exposure has become the major threat to flood-hit malnourished children, U.N. experts said

Wednesday. "There is no epidemic of any disease now but 91 per cent of the children are underweight and six per cent are severely malnourished with reports of acute respiratory infection," T.O. Kyaw Mint of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) told a news briefing.

Rain continued to pound Dhaka early Wednesday, submerging more suburbs and bringing fresh misery to thousands of residents.

Meteorologist Sajedur Rahman said monsoon rains resumed Wednesday and would continue until the first week of October.

The relief ministry said the situation in 32 of the flooded districts had worsened with an onrush of water across the border in India swelling major rivers running through Bangladesh. The Flood Warning Centre late Wednesday said the water level in upstream stretches of major rivers was likely to fall during the next 48 hours. However, with very rough seas and abnormally high tides in the Bay of Bengal the water would drain away only slowly.

U.N. rights chief to protest after Chinese police beat petitioner

BEIJING (AFP) — U.N. Human Rights chief Mary Robinson will protest to China's foreign ministry after a dissident's wife who tried to meet her Wednesday was dragged away and reportedly beaten by police, a U.N. spokesman said.

Six plainclothes policemen and hotel security guards seized Chu Hailan as she waited quietly outside Beijing's Hilton hotel where Robinson was due to arrive for a media briefing, witnesses said.

Chu told AFP after being released that during seven hours of detention in the hotel's security department, police kicked and beat her.

"My back is hurt. I can barely walk," she said after returning home.

Robinson's spokesman Jose Diaz said Robinson learnt about the incident only afterwards.

"She will be raising this with the foreign ministry... She

thinks people should be able to contact her directly," he said before Chu's release.

The foreign ministry and Hilton managers earlier indicated police were not involved, saying she was removed by hotel security for disturbing order and then released.

Chu, 36, the wife of jailed labour activist Liu Nianchun, had written an open letter to Robinson Monday to ask her help in obtaining the release of her husband, whose health is worsening in a prison camp.

Unaware of Chu's detention, Robinson gave a speech in which she said human rights were "indivisible, interrelated and interdependent" and challenged China's view of the primacy of economic rights.

"Whether civil, cultural, economic, political or social ... none of these [rights] can be fully realised without democratic governance and the rule of law," she said.

The first U.N. Human Rights

Commissioner to visit China. Robinson is seeking to establish working ties between Beijing and international human rights groups.

Diaz said Robinson's delegation had received no faxes or calls from dissidents during their stay in Beijing, despite an outpouring of open letters and other appeals concerning political oppression.

While the delegation insists it is open to approaches by ordinary citizens, Chinese handlers are making such meetings close to impossible.

Journalists complained of getting repeated busy signals from delegation hotel rooms even during hours when officials confirmed being out.

Monday, Chu told AFP she was very disappointed that Robinson had made no contact with the dissident community in China. "If Mary Robinson really knew about the situation of China's human rights, she should meet with us," she said.

But an official source said the goal of Robinson's visit was to support positive trends in China, not to put the country on trial. "You can't come to a country like China and impose a human rights programme," he said.

Robinson left Beijing Wednesday afternoon for the southwestern city of Chengdu en route to Tibet.

She will spend Thursday and Friday in the sensitive Himalayan region, where overseas critics accuse China of widespread human rights abuses, including suppression of the indigenous Buddhist religion.

An informed source said Robinson would not visit any Tibetan prisons, where unconfirmed reports say inmates who have talked with foreign visitors in the past have been subjected to violent reprisals.

"What you get out of it compared with the price that people pay afterwards isn't worth it," he said.

Jurists accuse Sri Lankan forces of killings

GENEVA (R) — An international panel of prominent jurists said Wednesday Sri Lankan security forces had unlawfully killed thousands of Sinhalese and Tamils since 1983 and that those responsible had gone unpunished.

The three jurists, who made an investigative mission a year ago to the strife-torn island, called for swift prosecution of those who had carried out the extrajudicial executions and caused the disappearances.

Their report also criticised emergency regulations as being under insufficient parliamentary control, as well as sweeping powers given under the prevention of terrorism act.

It was issued by the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers a day after Sri Lanka extended for another month the island-wide state of emergency imposed in August on the grounds that it was

needed to maintain law and order.

The jurists, whose 186-page report was entitled "Judicial Independence in Sri Lanka," were Lord William Goodhart Q.C. of Britain, Praful N. Bhagwati, a former chief justice of India, and Phineas Mojaelo, a member of the judicial service commission and law commission of South Africa.

"Between 1983 and the present day, the security forces in Sri Lanka [including the armed forces, the police and local militia units armed by the government] have been responsible for thousands of unlawful killings," the report said.

"After a welcome decline in 1994 and 1995, there was a significant recurrence in 1996 [mainly in the Jaffna peninsula] and, though declining again, these incidents are still continuing," it added.

The report said that steps to punish those responsible for the killings had been "manifestly inadequate."

"A culture of impunity has developed. At the date of the mission, not a single member of the security forces had been convicted of murder in any case arising out of the misconduct of those forces."

Lord William, who headed the mission, told Reuters: "The figures suggest the worst of killings were in the JVP insurgency [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, a left-wing nationalist party] from 1987 to 1990 and were of Sinhalese. Since 1990, they have been of Tamils, but the numbers are considerably smaller."

The Geneva-based Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers promotes the need for an independent judiciary and supports judges and lawyers who are harassed or

persecuted. It is part of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ).

Greater judicial control was needed to control the excessive powers of detention without trial, according to the report.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga last month declared an island-wide emergency under a special ordinance, saying it was meant to preserve public order and maintain essential services and supplies. The government later postponed key elections to five of the eight provincial council polls, citing the uncertain security situation in the country.

Part of Sri Lanka, including the north and the east, had been under a longstanding state of emergency because of the threat of attacks by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels who have been fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils since 1983.



Cambodian demonstrators Wednesday carry a wounded monk shot by police to safety during a violent dispersal of protesters by police. Fresh clashes between protesters and police broke out in the Cambodian capital on Wednesday as opposition leaders condemned the violence and vowed to continue their campaign against the July election result (Reuters photo)

Cambodian government bans opposition protests

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The government of Cambodia's ruling strongman Hun Sen Wednesday banned opposition supporters and Buddhist monks from staging further protests following three days of violent crackdowns, state television announced.

"The meeting of groups cannot continue unless they respect the principles of real democracy and legal implementation of authorised law," an interior ministry statement was quoted as saying.

"The demonstration law mentions clearly that meeting in groups at public places or roads or the gathering on public roads is a demonstration that can affect public peace, order

and security and has to be strongly prohibited," it said.

It added the participation of Buddhist monks in protests "is an act against Buddhist law and political party law."

The statement also denied a monk was killed in Wednesday's clean-up operation, when police fired shots and used batons and water cannon to clear a gathering outside opposition FUNCINPEC leader Prince Norodom Ranariddh's residence.

It said one man had been killed, 44-year-old Horn Kao Davy, but "without clear cause." It said six policemen were also wounded.

A statement from the United Nations Centre for

Human Rights confirmed one protester was killed Monday and one on Wednesday. Human rights officials and a diplomatic source said the dead man was a Buddhist monk.

Angry crowds continued to gather late Wednesday, many chanting anti-Vietnamese slogans aimed at Hanoi which they accuse of backing Hun Sen. Last week mobs brutally killed five ethnic Vietnamese, leaving opposition leaders open to accusations of inciting racial hatred.

Meanwhile a FUNCINPEC official, Cabinet Director Mu Sokhua, said an official request to hold a demonstration Sunday had been submitted to authorities.

Thai military officers linked to international drug ring

BANGKOK (AP) — In the worst scandal to hit the Thai military in years, 18 officers have been named as suspected members of an international heroin trafficking syndicate, the country's top drug fighting agency said Wednesday.

"They are middle ranking officers, from colonels down to lieutenants," said Sorasit Sangpraser, deputy secretary general of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB).

The officers are suspected of being part of an international drug smuggling and organised crime syndicate, he said. Thailand is a major transit point for heroin smuggled out of neighbouring Myanmar, also known as Burma, the second largest producer of the drug in the world.

The names of the 18 have been forwarded to the Office of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces for further investigation, he said.

The ONCB probe was launched after Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai was angered over a scandal involving a military officer.

Earlier this month, a captain attached to the Supreme Command was arrested for allegedly murdering an academic. The ONCB revealed after his arrest that Captain Patchara Phrompao had been convicted of smuggling 3.5 kilograms of heroin into Australia and spent four years in jail there from 1993-97.

It is believed the 18 suspects had worked with Patchara as a team of couriers trafficking heroin to foreign countries, Sorasit said.

After he was released, he changed his name and was reinstated into the army, reportedly with the help of powerful connections.

Anwar steps up Malaysian reform campaign

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) — Malaysia's ousted deputy premier lashed out at police Wednesday, saying his family and many associates had been harassed by authorities since his firing last week.

"All my family friends and colleagues live in fear. They have been threatened by the police," Anwar Ibrahim told reporters at his home in a Kuala Lumpur suburb, where he has been holed up for a week, fearing arrest.

Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammad sacked Anwar last week from his posts of deputy prime minister and finance minister.

Anwar is under police investigation for allegations ranging from sexual misconduct to treason.

Anwar said police pulled his private secretary from his car Tuesday night for questioning and he had not been seen since.

Anwar's adopted brother Sukma Dermawan has also not been seen since his arrest Sunday, Anwar said. Sukma is named as one of Anwar's sex partners in a book that is at the heart of the investigation against the ousted minister.

Police were not immediately available for comment.

"This is not the Malaysia that I know," Anwar said angrily Wednesday, directing his words at the police. "This is not a police state. You'll have to respect the laws of the country."

Under virtual house arrest since last week, Anwar called on supporters earlier Wednesday to help spread his reform message nationwide.

"We must spread the news. No power on earth can break our spirits. You have to work now. Now! Now! Now!" Anwar told a small group of cheering supporters in his living room.

on McDonald's

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Investing in the future

THE FIRST Jordanian businesspersons' conference in Amman concluded Wednesday with ambitious recommendations to establish sustainable partnerships to boost the Kingdom's economy. Whether or not these recommendations will be affected on the ground remains to be seen. Investment in this country is still viewed in terms of dinars and piastres that will flow into the treasury and not as a means of creating jobs for the unemployed thousands, enhancing our per capita and boosting the gross domestic product.

Potential investors still face collection-oriented legislations and the passive and discouraging attitude of civil servants who come into contact with them. That is why so many Jordanians have either moved their investments to other countries, such as Egypt or the United Arab Emirates, or kept them in banks at home and abroad. It is urgent that we look at the experience of our Arab brothers in this domain.

In Egypt, taxes and bureaucracy were reduced to a bare minimum, luring not only Arab but foreign investments as well.

The United Arab Emirates' Jabal Ali free zone is throbbing with business, because government intervention is very limited and businesspeople run the show. According to recent reports, there are more than 50 Jordanian companies operating in Jabal Ali, home to about 1,300 other foreign establishments. The zone offers very low or no tariffs, simple bureaucracy, free business conduct and prompt dispute arbitration. But most important, potential investors are received by attentive ears and an intention to serve them.

Our climate is not as competitive as that of Jabal Ali or Egypt. And even if all the conference's recommendations were put into effect, trust, integral to sustaining profitable projects, can only be built over time. How long that will take depends on how soon we start and how we manage the process. Most important is to look at investment as a process that does not yield immediate returns. But in a country like Jordan it immediately creates badly-needed employment. More people employed means more money circulated and more sales tax collected for the treasury.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek criticised the Ministry of Trade, Supply and Industry for dissolving the board of directors of the debt-ridden Jordan Tobacco and Cigarettes Company, and forming a new one comprised of the private and public sector. He said the new board will not be able to salvage the company from deteriorating. The move will only delay the inevitable for a time. Fanek expected that creditors will force the new board to liquidate the company. However, the new board will eventually liquidate the tobacco manufacturer anyway. The creditors may grant more loans, which will lead to further deterioration for the troubled firm, said Fanek. The writer called on the new board to refuse its mission, because its members do not have enough experience in the field. Fanek charged that with the entry of two new companies on the market, monopoly of the market has vanished and the company has already lost around 70 per cent of its sales. In a bid to overcome the losses, the company has halted paying sales taxes to the government, which comprise 79 per cent of the overall sales price. This has made it worse, contends Fanek.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi commented on the scheduled visit of the American envoy Dennis Ross to the region. He said the hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has realised that his policy of procrastination is short-lived, and at the end of the day, he has to abide by Israeli commitments to the Oslo accords. According to recent polls, most Israeli people prefer peace with the Palestinians. Election experts suggested Netanyahu launch the upcoming election campaign with a call for peace in the region. Rintawi said Netanyahu realises that if he wants to win, there should be peace with the Palestinians. Rintawi also said that Netanyahu's consultants have suggested negotiating a new deal with the Palestinian National Authority which will prompt a two-year redeployment from the West Bank instead of the eight months current deal-line, and postponing the declaration of the Palestine state until the next century. Israel, internally, would recognise the Palestinian state under certain conditions, he added.

View from Academia

An alternative to rote learning

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

DESPITE OUR attempts (at times sincere, at times purely symbolic) to introduce the latest in learning/teaching strategies at the school as well as university level, we find ourselves complaining nonetheless that our classrooms are still textbook-based and teacher-centred. Many of our students still resort, and heavily so, to memorisation and rote learning. It is not an uncommon sight, even at our universities, to find students, as exam days approach, strolling back and forth with books or notebooks open in their hands, rhythmically reciting phrases and sentences from them aloud, with the intention of memorising them.

A colleague of mine complained in a meeting we held to discuss this particular subject a month or so ago: "We try to teach our students how to analyse, and they memorise the analysis."

What should be done?

Well, the answer is not easy. We have been talking about this matter for almost four decades now. In theory, many approaches to learning/teaching sound appealing; in practice, only a couple of them seem to work, and not for all students or situations. The communicative approach has excellent virtues, and so do class presentations and the discussions that follow.

One approach which I wish to propose here (propose more of, I should say) is research.

Research? For students at the school level? Maybe you're talking about students at the university level. I am talking about both levels: students from KG to the PhD, without exception.

In our part of the world where libraries are poor and resources are limited? Yes, in our part of the world — for the privileged and the less privileged, for the haves and the have-nots, for public and private schools.

You see, it all depends on how you define research. Like other words in the dictionary and like other concepts in education or culture at large, the term may mean so many things to so many people. Some, for example, see it as a highly serious, highly meticulous, and highly specialised activity conducted slowly and carefully with aim of arriving at a solution for a problem, a cure for a disease, a striking invention, a ground-breaking theory, etc., for the completion of which you need a lot of funds, resources, and a conducive environment.

This is not what I mean by research here. Otherwise, forget it, for no one in our society can conduct research, if this is

what it means and if this is what it entails.

To me, research means, simply, the two notions or acts of which the term itself is composed: "search" and "re-". In this particular order. In other words, rather than hand our students everything on a silver platter, through our lengthy explanations, comments or lectures (some still lecture at our schools and universities, believe it or not), rather than confine their experience of knowledge to the knowledge we hand them in a nutshell (the textbook), let's require our students — frequently? often? regularly? — to search for knowledge themselves. What if, because of our limited resources, they cannot find much on their own? Simple: let them search more — i.e. re-search.

The idea here is to wean students off both teachers and textbooks. Of course, the teacher is still needed and, of course, the textbook is still needed. But the idea is to assign students certain tasks to pursue on their own and report to class — in writing or orally — about them.

We can, for instance, ask them to define a concept in any subject (history, geography, math, physics, literature, etc.), introduce a famous person (a historian, a scientist, a politician, a literary figure, etc.), determine the causes of a phenomenon or an event (economic recession, obesity, nuclear proliferation, etc.), and so on.

Some may hasten to ask: How is this different from what we already often do when we assign presentations and reports to students. My answer is: first of all, not all teachers (not even a majority of them), at the school and university levels, assign presentations and reports frequently and seriously; secondly, what I am talking about is something slightly more serious and different than going to the library, copying a page, or a paragraph from this book and one from another.

It is a process which allows the student to feel fully responsible for what they want to report about and fully responsible about it. There has to be an understanding on the part of the student of the seriousness of the task. What is to be presented is not someone's opinion but the student's; and it has to be an opinion based on the personal, study and analysis of the opinions of others — on search and re-search.

If I am asking students to research the definition of inflation, for example, or the sonnet, I do not expect them to create a new definition. We cannot reinvent the wheel, obviously. What I expect, rather, is a careful understanding of inflation or sonnet through the careful examination of the many definitions available and the restating of the main notion

behind each concept in the student's own words. This is, of course, one humble example. Other more sophisticated and elaborate examples can be cited.

The process of search and research itself is rewarding. When I assign something to my students at the university, the first thing they do is to come and ask: where do I go to find information about this? I answer: I do not know; you have to figure this out yourself. They come back the next day: I could not find much in the library? I answer: where did you look? In the stacks. Did you check the periodicals? No. Well, go and check. They come back the third day. I have found a couple of articles in the periodicals, but you said you needed five. What do I do? Well, did you check the Amman Municipality Library? No. Did you check the USIS or British Council library? No. Well, try to.

Even in our rural areas, our students need to take school libraries seriously (humble though they may be), libraries at neighbouring schools, and libraries in the neighbouring towns. The more privileged, with access to Internet, can make use of this excellent tool.

Research is also more than going to libraries, studying the ideas of others and reporting about them, checking out books and photocopying them. It is a process which incorporates many processes: reading, comprehending, checking facts, comparing, contrasting, thinking, rethinking, analysing, constructing, deconstructing, reconstructing, etc.

Paradoxically and ironically, one of the worst vices of textbooks is that not only do they simplify knowledge in a somewhat superficial way, but they spoil students by making information easily available to them thereby depriving them of the pleasure and value of searching for information.

When I was in the 9th grade, I was asked by my Arabic teacher to give a presentation on Gibran. I went to the school library and to the Amman Municipality Library, checked out some books, and delivered the presentation orally in front of my fellow students. Until now, I remember exact dates relating to Gibran's life, exact names of people and places, exact titles of books, exact ideas, etc. By contrast, how many other poets did I study at school? Tens at least. How much do I know about them now? Very little.

Research can be used for learning/teaching purposes; I wish to propose and emphasise this. It may not be the magical cure for the malady of memorisation and rote learning. But it certainly does help in slowly eradicating such a malady and in empowering our students to think and to know.

The View from the East:

U.S. resolve is needed

By Daoud Kuttab

U.S. President Clinton did well remembering the existence of the Middle East conflict and dispatching his peace envoy to the area. But he is wrong if he thinks that this is all it takes to produce a breakthrough in the peace process. And time is not on the side of peace.

Palestinians are pessimistic about the success of the latest Ross mission. After all, this is not his first visit to the area, and no tangible change has taken place since he last visited four months ago.

Almost a year ago and after well calculated planning and thought, the U.S. suggested a compromise deal that they felt was fair to both sides. Palestinians were told that this was a package deal, that neither side could make any changes to it. The Palestinian leadership accepted the plan. Israeli rejection came in the form of trying to make changes. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned both sides that the U.S. would publicise the plan and would tell the world who had held up its implementation. That threat has never been carried out. Instead the Americans came with an old and overused Israeli idea. All that is needed to bring about peace in the Middle East, they argued, was for the parties to talk together face to face.

As expected this naive American idea of leaving Palestinians and Israelis to work out their problems has failed. After all, if the Israelis would not yield to their American allies, why would they yield to the Palestinians? In a conflict with such a lopsided balance of power, such an idea was doomed to fail, if the weak side didn't capitulate to the other. Ross's return is an admission of this failure.

Now that the political ball is back in the U.S. court, what will the Clinton Administration do? To begin with, Clinton needs to decide whether he is willing to pay the political price for doing what it takes to bring forth a resolution. The area is ripe, the gap between the parties is narrow and the White House can sure use some good news. If Dennis Ross is backed by genuine U.S. resolve to bring about a solution, he will. His meetings can't simply be to take notes. In order to defend the credibility of the U.S. foreign policy, he must make full use of the clout of the world's superpower. The idea of a package deal must be made clear. If it is negotiable, then both sides should be allowed to renegotiate, if not, then both sides must be told in no uncertain terms that this is it. Giving one side the opportunity to open up the deal has been a terrible mistake. It is either a package deal, or we are back to square one and any one side can submit its demands.

The balance of power between the Israelis and the Palestinians should not be allowed to influence U.S. policy. The Americans had worked in Israeli sensitivities and demands when the package deal was suggested. By deciding on the figure of 13% the Americans had made a major compromise in favour of the Israelis. The original Oslo Agreement speaks clearly about the need for Israel to withdraw from all the Palestinian territories with the exception of Jerusalem, settlements and military posts. This amounts to a much bigger figure for the first and second redeployment than 13%. Nevertheless, Palestinians reluctantly accepted this suggestion as a way to move the process forward. Apparently by holding out, the Israelis were able to try and make changes to the original plan. Being the stronger party, the Americans were unable, or rather unwilling, to

stop this heavy-handed Israeli tactic. The result has been that Palestinians have refused any changes in the deal they agreed upon. By tolerating this Israeli use of its political and military advantage, the public gets the impression that Palestinians are intransigent and the Israelis are seen as flexible, throwing in new ideas every time. The reality is the opposite.

Finally, the Clinton Administration and Israel must remember the human factor. Five years after the beginning of Oslo, some of the most vocal supporters of it have been unable to continue to defend it. The average Palestinian today is utterly frustrated by the entire process. Simple things like a Gaza-West Bank free passage road has yet to be opened. Thousands of students and family members have been unable to make the journey between these two locations defined in the Oslo Agreement as one geographic unit. Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes have reached unprecedented heights with barely any international criticism. East Jerusalem has become like a foreign city to most Palestinians as the entry to the city continues to be forbidden without a permit. An apartheid-like situation is taking legal cover as Israeli settlers fall under different laws from Palestinians living in the same geographic area. The settlers have the freedom to travel, they pay less for water and electricity and are treated differently by the Israeli police than Palestinians.

It is no wonder that the average Palestinian has lost faith in peace, in the Americans, the Israelis and even their own national authority. Time is certainly not on the side of peace despite the artificial relative quiet.

The writer is the director of the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University in Jerusalem.

LETTERS

Amend the law

To the Editor:

THE NEWS from this erudite newspaper inform us that the prime minister and the minister of information are subverting behind the fact that they have inherited the Press and Publications Law from the previous government, and that they will be objective in implementing that law.

Gentlemen, I think your immediate objective is to amend this egregious despised and incongruous law so it can become a more acceptable and fair law to all the concerned parties, and let us to be proud of you and say in the future that your government and no other has passed a new, modern, fair and well accepted law to future governments.

No one can guarantee that future governments will be objective.

Akef Abdib Qasous
 P.O. Box 811618
 Amman

Turkey aims at stronger ties with U.S.

By George S. Hishmeh

JUST AS the Turkish Prime Minister, Mesut Yilmaz, was calling on Jordanian, Israeli and Palestinian leaders this week, Turkish officials here revealed Ankara's hopes for "increased and heightened co-operation" with the United States with the blessings of the American Jewish community.

"There are huge projects to be realised (in Turkey) which require firm and political will and massive investments of capital and human resources," declared the new Turkish ambassador in Washington, Baki Ilkin. "We need to elevate our relations to a level that would be able to serve the interests of our two friendly countries and nations in a much more extensive manner."

The ambassador was speaking September 2 to invited guests of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an influential think-tank established with American Jewish money by Martin Indyk, who is at present the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Policy.

The institute has started an ambitious Turkish Research Program, headed by a former State Department official, Alan Makovsky, which describes its purpose as, among other things, seeking "to introduce the Washington community to Turkey's leading political, diplomatic, military, and academic figures" through a number of different programs.

In addition to producing its own research and analysis on Turkey in an effort "to discern current and probable trends in Turkish foreign policy and the impact these trends may have on U.S. interests and U.S.-Turkish relations," the institute has established a Visiting Military Fellows

Program for Turkish military officers.

In 1997-98 the institute held five two-day seminars on Turkey and its international relations. Five dozen experts and scholars, including 35 from Turkey, took part, as well as U.S. government officials.

Ambassador Ilkin left no doubt that the Turkish government is also counting on the "nearly 300,000 strong" Turkish-American community in the United States "to play an active part in shaping American public opinion regarding Turkey." He went a step further, saying, "Although we cannot speak of a Turkish lobby at this stage, such a prospect is not far away from developing."

A Turkish-American millionaire has recently donated several million dollars to Georgetown University for the establishment of a Turkish chair. Princeton University also recently founded a similar position, but an effort to fund a chair at the University of California, was criticised by the Armenian community there, especially after it became known that the funds were donated by the Turkish government which also reportedly supported the Princeton chair. The prestigious university was compelled to turn down the Turkish offer.

The image that Turkey hopes to project here, in the words of its new ambassador, is the "enhanced partnership" with the United States which he feels has resulted in "closer political consultations on regional and global matters as well as much deeper level of economic co-operation." He particularly underlined Turkey's role "as a catalyst for regional economic co-operation, which is the key to lasting peace and stability."

More importantly, in the opinion of the Turkish

envoy, is the co-operation of the two governments in "securing necessary energy resources for the future." The United States has given strong support for the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline project and Ankara and Washington are said to be co-operating "very closely" on the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project.

But Turkey's aspiration, it became obvious in the ambassador's presentation, is "to maintain and build" upon the country's long-established defence and military relations with the United States, something akin to what Israel has with the United States. "I do not think I need to describe the neighbourhood in which we live," he elaborated, "which necessitates that we maintain such a high level of alertness and preparedness."

He said his country is "embarking upon a long-term, multi-billion dollar modernisation program for its armed forces." He left no doubt that the Ankara government will continue to rely on the U.S. in this field since Washington remains "a trusted and dependable source for its defence procurement."

As a consequence of the modernisation program, he thought there exists "numerous" possibilities for joint ventures and business opportunities in Turkey. In other words, he continued, "we hope that U.S. defence contractors will be able to tap into this potential as well."

Turkish support for the Middle East peace process was expressed unhesitatingly and went on to voice hope that Turkey and Israel — "the only other democracy in our southern neighbourhood" — will provide "the nucleus from which long term regional co-operation and dialogue will spring."

He continued: "We also maintain close historical and cultural

ties with the Palestinians, encouraging them to build viable democratic and economic institutions. We very much hope that U.S. efforts will lead to lasting peace and co-operation between the Israelis and Palestinians."

Ilkin did not go as far as a previous speaker from the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Oguz Celikol, who told the institute last April that "Turkey believes that the parties to the (Middleast) peace process should implement the (Oslo) agreements reached and honour their commitments; Turkey does not see an alternative to this course."

He also stated then that Turkey "regrets the restrictive measures over (Palestinians) which pendence also those who have nothing to do with terrorism," adding that his country feels that the "prolongation of the issue of settlements undermines further the already fragile atmosphere in the region and serve the interests of radical opponents of the peace process."

Although this Turkish position may please some Palestinians, the depth of Israeli and Turkish relations cannot be discounted. Celikol reported last April that Turkey and Israel have signed a total of 19 agreements, the majority of which are intended "to prepare the ground for scientific, economic and technical co-operation" between them.

Celikol underlined his government's apparent hope of placing Turkey on an equal footing with Israel in American perceptions. Without elaboration he noted that "in recent years unprecedented improvements in the relations between the two very important allies of the United States in the Middle East, Turkey and Israel, have been realised. Turkey sees this development as a contribution to regional stability."

Z. Majdoubeh

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LETTERS

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o the Editor:

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Akef Abdih Qusous
P.O. Box 111618
Amman

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Society on the move

It's their day!



Ibrahim Shahzadeh

IT'S NO small task being director general of Jordan Radio and Television, but Ibrahim Shahzadeh is rearing to go! A virtual son of Jordanian broadcasting, Shahzadeh has nearly 40 years of experience in the business, sprinkled with stints in similar arenas outside the Kingdom as well. He joined Jordan Radio in the late 50s, moved on to establish the Arabic section for Radio Iran in late 1960, then it was off to London to work for the BBC World Service in 1964. Shahzadeh returned to Jordan and started with JTV in late 1967. He was the station's first news anchor. He went on to head the news exchange and special operations departments in 1973 and in that capacity represented Jordan in various international radio and television unions. In fact he was the first non-European to be elected vice president of the news committee of the European Broadcasting Union in 1985. In 1986 Shahzadeh became director of news, in 1989 director of Radio Jordan, and in 1991 director of Jordan Television until his appointment in 1994 as advisor for JRTV as he moved into the private sector. Although his plans for JTV are ambitious, Shahzadeh says that with the help of the government and the "enthusiastic minis-

ter" — he refers to his predecessor, now Minister of Information, Nasser Judeh — he expects to put JRTV on the map along with competing stations in the region. He sees promise in promoting the station commercially, an idea supported by Judeh in various state-run sectors. But even with his top heavy agenda at the helm of JRTV, Shahzadeh intends to continue hosting his popular call-in talk show "Frankly from Amman." Frankly,

he says, whatever official duties one is asked to assume should not preclude one from continuing to practise one's particular profession.

VINDICATED: Thougan Obeidat has had his day in court and come out smiling. Obeidat, who in early 1997 was appointed secretary general of the Ministry of Youth until a Cabinet decision forced his retirement nine months ago, appealed to the Higher Court of Justice saying he had been wronged by then Minister Qasem Abu Ein. A life-time civil servant, Obeidat began his career at the Ministry of Education in the 60s as deputy secretary general and remained there until his appointment to the Ministry of Youth in 1997. He was also secretary general of the Jordanian Olympic Committee, a post, he said, he was also stripped of last year. Obeidat convinced the six court judges that his intentions, plans and efforts at the ministry were all meant to serve the youth of the country. He said the convincing was easy. According to Obeidat, the court's ruling was strongly worded against the former minister, whereas he himself was

described as highly committed to the laws and regulations of the ministry in the interest of Jordan. By unanimous decision, the court, on July 29, ruled that Obeidat is not retired and is indeed secretary general of the Ministry of Youth and should be compensated for any loss of wages and benefits owed him since the Cabinet decision was taken. The newly-formed Cabinet happily complied with the court decision and Obeidat received a telephone call from Minister of Youth Talal Hassan inviting him to return to his office. Obeidat, who is wondering who will take the responsibility of compensating him for the past nine months, says he will return to work on Sept. 16 and is delighted to have Talal Hassan as his minister. He says he was most grateful to his lawyer Fahed Abu Ithman and the ministry employees who all testified in his favour, as well as the judges, one of whom, Hashim Alayan, passed away only yesterday. Obeidat said Jordanians should be proud of their justice system and government officials should no longer fear to take legal recourse against what they feel are arbitrary decisions of those in power. "I think all have celebrated the court's decision," the secretary general said.

DEALING WITH IT: A television production team from CNN is in Amman until Friday working on piecing together a documentary on what is being done in Jordan to counter "crimes of honour." The piece will be part of the Newsstand Time programme aired on CNN, a one-hour news magazine hosted by Bernard Shaw and Jeff Greenfield. The segment, which will feature an interview with Her Majesty Queen Noor, will profile the work of J.T. staff writer Rana Hussein both in her reporting on crimes of honour as well as her activities in supporting NGOs that deal with women's issues. Also featured will be interviews with activist and lawyer Asma Khader, chief of the National Institute of Forensics Mu'men Hadidi, and Noor Imam of the Jordanian Women's Union. The CNN production team led by Jo LeGood has visited the newly formed Family Protection Unit at the Public Security Department and women incarcerated for their own protection against being the victims of a crime of honour. The segment will be presented by Shaw and is expected to air in early October.

SITE-SAVING: On Saturday a German architect specialising in archaeological projects is to arrive in Jordan to take over the supervision of the reconstruction of the West Theatre in Um Qais. Renata Barscay Regner will be working through the Department of Antiquities under the supervision of director Ghazi Bishah for the next two years. Ms. Regner, who is married and has a daughter, has had much experience in similar projects in Syria where she worked on the Roman temple of Hauran for the German Archaeological Institute as well as earlier work also in Syria and antiquities sites in Turkey. The West Theatre is a small but dramatic site for its black basalt construction and its basalt chairs (not seats). It overlooks the plain of Um Qais towards the Jordan Valley, northern Palestine and Lake Tiberias. Earlier partial restoration work was conducted by German and Jordanian engineers. Controversy over such works on this particular theatre seems to indicate that the next stage may also be a partial restoration.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Diet special

The fatties are taking over

How the nations rank:
From the thinnest to the fattest
the percentage of each population
classified as obese



By Jeremy Laurance

FATTIES ARE taking over the globe. In every country in the developed world, waistlines are expanding. As prosperity grows, so do bottoms and, with some exceptions, a rough guide to national income can be obtained from the average dress or trouser size.

In Europe, obesity has increased by 10 to 40 per cent in most countries over the past decade and similar increases have been seen in the United States, Australia and the Far East. Figures presented at the International Congress on Obesity in Paris this week demonstrate that obesity is a global epidemic.

However, as the league table of the fattest and thinnest nations shows, the proportion of the population who are obese varies widely across the globe from the diminutive Chinese to the bulky Samoans. Obesity is not merely reflection of the calories on the plate. It is influenced by genes, culture, physical activity and social attitudes.

In Britain, 15 per cent of men and 16.5 per cent of women are classified as obese, more than twice the proportion in 1980 when the equivalent figures were six per cent of men and eight per cent of women. More than one-third of women and almost half of men are considered overweight. Yet, as a nation, we are eating no more than we did two decades ago. The expanding British waistline is linked to the decline in physical activity. More cars and video recorders have meant more flab.

In a global context, the British come somewhere in the middle of the bulk rankings. The two main contributors to obesity are a sedentary lifestyle and a high fat diet and both are linked to prosperity.

Later this month, Britain's fatties will be able to try a new anti obesity pill which works by compelling those who take it to stick to a low fat diet. Xenical, which will be available only on prescription, works by blocking the absorption of fat so that it is excreted instead of ending up on the hips and thighs. Trials on 7,000 patients have shown that up to half achieved a 10 per cent weight loss maintained over two years.

The drug, whose chemical name is orlistat, is made by Roche and received its European licence on July 30. It is to be launched in the U.K. on September 21.

The drug is licensed for the treatment of obese patients with a body mass index over 30. It has a different action from previous diet pills which worked by suppressing the appetite. If too much fat is eaten the amount remaining in the gut results in diarrhoea, providing a warning signal to the dieter.

Some experts have welcomed it as a novel

approach to a growing public health problem. Dr. Nick Finer, a specialist in obesity at the Luton and Dunstable hospital said: "It is a bit like having a personal minder who slaps you on the hands as you reach for the cream cakes."

Others are sceptical. Professor John Garrow, editor of the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition and former professor of human nutrition at St. Bartholomew's hospital, London, said there was nothing drugs did that diets could not do. The problem is, Professor Garrow said, "suggesting that obesity is controllable is seen as victim blaming. It is politically incorrect, although scientifically it is correct."

Although obesity is now a global epidemic, the bigger surprise is that more people are not affected. Animal studies have shown that rats given an unlimited quantity of palatable food will continue to put on weight until the food is restricted. Humans are no different, according to Professor Garrow.

"Human beings now live to 70 or 80 when they were designed to live to 20 or 30 from subsistence agriculture where scratching a living was pretty difficult. Now that we are living to a staggering age with food available 24 hours a day it is surprising that we are not all obese. The only reason people are not is that they are either young — because it takes time to gain weight — or that they have successfully exercised some control over their weight."

Estimates by the World Health Organisation's task force on obesity suggest that this is not mere fantasy. By 2005, there will be around 26 million obese adults in the U.S. On present trends, the entire population will be obese in 35 years unless Americans can be persuaded to curb their appetites.

Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI) over 30. BMI is a measure of thinness/fatness derived from a complex formula (weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared).

A similar approach, which gives a rough guide, is to take a waist measurement. If it is more than 102cm for a man (40in) or 88cm (35in) for a woman, their chances of suffering health problems associated with their weight rise sharply.

— The Independent

WHO IS THE FATTEST OF THEM ALL?

Percentage of population who are obese
(body mass index over 30)

	Men	Women
China	1.2	1.6
Japan	1.7	2.7
Sweden	5.3	9.1
Netherlands	8.4	8.3
New Zealand	10.0	13.0
Australia	11.5	13.2
Finland	14.0	11.0
England	15.0	16.5
United Arab Emirates	15.8	38.0
Czech Republic	16.0	28.0
Former west Germany	17.0	19.0
USA	20.0	25.0
Former east Germany	21.0	27.0
Lithuania	22.0	45.0
Samoa	58.4	76.8

Based on the latest figures available.
*Body mass index is a measure of thinness/fatness derived by dividing weight in kilograms by height in metres squared. A BMI of 15 to 20 is underweight, 20 to 25 is healthy, 25 to 30 is overweight and over 30 is obese.

Muesli, skiing and health: Why Swedes stay slim

WITHIN EUROPE, Sweden ranks as the slimmest nation, thanks to muesli, skiing and a belief in physical prowess — reflected in the popularity of its sports clubs, which boast among the highest membership in Europe. In Germany, sausages and Sachertorte combined with a commitment to Vorsprung durch Technik has made the most prosperous nation also the weightiest.

In China, a largely rural lifestyle which makes heavy physical demands combined with a low-fat, rice-based diet keeps the population trim. In the U.S., where people commute to offices in air-conditioned cars and only break sweat when the pizza delivery is late, average seat sizes have increased.

Cultural factors play their part. In Samoa and neighbouring islands in the Pacific, obesity has long been regarded as a symbol of high status and prosperity and is seen as attractive as a result. In recent years, there have been signs that these traditional notions are changing as more Westernised ideas of an attractive body size take hold.

There are also sex differences. Women to be fatter than men, a legacy of child-bearing. But here, too, culture plays a part. In the United Arab Emirates, male obesity rates are similar to those in Britain but among women they are more than twice as high.

Despite the enormous international range in rates of obesity, only about 20 per cent of differences in body shape can be attributed to genes, according to Professor Garrow.

"If it were the case that the Chinese and Japanese had something in their genes that kept them thin they wouldn't become taller and fatter when they migrated to the U.S. But migration studies show that they do,

— The Independent

Catwalk model quits, jaded by waif worship

By Amelia Gentleman

THE FASHION industry's obsession with abnormally slender physiques has come under fire again, this time from within.

Teenage model Sarah Thomas has announced her decision to quit the catwalk in Paris, New York and Milan this year because she can no longer tolerate the fashion world's compulsive worship of the skinny form.

These views, from someone who has witnessed the industry's flaws first hand, have fuelled the long running criticism of a business that promotes unattainable and unhealthy ideals as the norm.

Described as one of Britain's modelling success stories, Ms. Thomas, aged 18, already feels jaded by the international fashion world and is rejecting the chance to earn up to £5,500 a day in the next autumn shows because of the "ghastly cattle market." She said: "I had begun to dislike putting up with the pressure to be thin. People want you to be skinnier all the time."

The model, now the "face" of the cosmetics company Cover Girl, began working at the age of 14 when Eileen Ford, an agent, took her on, saying: "If that girl does not make a million dollars in the next year, I'll eat my hat."

The attraction of the lifestyle quickly faded. She said yesterday: "You stand in a queue of hundreds of girls. Then somebody takes one look at your portfolio, closes it, hands it back, says 'no thanks' and doesn't even look up to say 'Hello.' It is so impersonal. It's all a bit sleazy."

Models who do not make the grade are treated with contempt. Ms. Thomas, who at 5ft 10in weighs a healthy nine stone, said: "I remember trying things on a couple

of times which were a bit tight around the hips and someone slapped my hips. That is hard to take. It is incredibly rude."

She said the drink, drug and eating problems of other models horrified her. "You see so many horrible things backstage. There are very young girls under 16, some on their own. Some can handle themselves, but I know what I was like at that age, and it drives me mad not being able to do anything about it."

Her comments echo those of model Emma Balfour who said earlier this year that she was leaving the catwalk, disgusted at the drug abuse and anorexia among colleagues.

Tim Newton, spokesman for the Eating Disorders Association, welcomed Ms. Thomas's comments. "The point she is making is not just about the pressure to be thin, she is also complaining about being treated merely as a body, and that's very much a factor with eating disorders."

In 1996, the fashion world briefly seemed to relax its outlook when size 16 model Sophie Dahl became famous, but two years on she remains an exception in a world dominated by matchstick waifs.

— The Guardian



Sarah Thomas: no to 'cattle market' (photo Chris Moore)

Installing, deleting, it can be a mess

chip talk

By Jean-Claude Elias

APART FROM operating sophisticated programmes, searching the Internet for hidden information or boldly going to scientific number crunching, the basic, most important operation that every PC user should perform consists of simple housekeeping. Grouping the files in coherent, consistent folders, giving them meaningful names, moving them from one location to another on the hard disk, deleting useless data and making back up copies of vital information are essential tasks to do in order to keep a PC — and its user — in good health. It's called file management.

Managing user files, those files you create when you type a letter, do a drawing, send an e-mail etc., is relatively easy. Even if most people ignore it or are too lazy to take care of their computer's file management, some still do it right. When it comes to installing programmes, however, things get a bit more complicated.

To use a programme under Windows operating system one needs to install it first. This consists of launching another, smaller piece of software called "Setup" or "Install," specific to each programme and that takes care of the operation. It will copy the necessary files from the source disk, typically a CD-ROM, onto the hard disk. It will eventually modify some of Windows files so that it can run the programme efficiently. Simply copying the programme from the CD without going through the installation wouldn't make it operable.

Computer configurations vary from one machine to another, and each programme instal-

lation works in a slightly different way, this depending on several technical factors. It would be impossible for users to handle all these different cases. This is why software designers create the "Setup" or "Install" programme that automatically processes the installations. Because programmes are installed through these special procedures, which internal details are not known to the operator, removing the programme also involves another special "uninstallation" routine. This is where most of the damage is usually done.

Even after nearly 12 years of Windows presence in the market, some still try to get rid of a programme simply by deleting its files. Firstly this doesn't completely remove the programme and secondly there's a high risk of damaging Windows, which means other programmes too may stop working correctly. The only way to remove a programme you do not need anymore is to go through the specific process that uninstalls it.

To make things more complicated, even if one follows the instructions by using the supplied "install" and "uninstall" programmes some software never leaves Windows completely. An infamous example is Microsoft's Internet Explorer version 4.0. Even after removal through legal procedures, bits and pieces of the programme remain on the hard disk, but the damage in such case is negligible. Often it will still occupy a tiny place on the hard disk. Given the huge size of modern hard disks this won't affect the overall performance of the computer. It is only after you decide one fine day to completely reformat — complete erasure — the disk that you can really clean up the mess left by multiple installs and uninstalls.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan Insurance Company distributing dividends at a rate of 12 per cent

THE JORDAN Insurance Company (JIC) generated a JD1.7 million net profit during the financial year ending March 31, 1998 compared to JD1.5 million during the same period of 1996/1997. Board Chairman Khaldoun Abu Hassan described the profit figure as a record compared to previous years despite the increase in the number of insurance companies operating in the local market.

Abu Hassan said the 27 insurance companies have engaged in an uncalculated and damaging competition which negatively affected the productivity and profitability of the firms. He called for reducing the number of operating companies noting that the volume of premiums in Jordan does not correspond with this number. Furthermore, Abu Hassan said, the JD60 million of capital invested in this sector and spread over the large number of companies does not enable the firms to increase the reserves and, consequently, to actively invest in various economic activities.

The chairman said insurance companies should be enabled to build additional technical reserves exempt from income tax to be able to face any emergency situation and to boost their capabilities which will reflect positively on the national economy.

The company posted JD1.9 million in net earnings during the financial year that ended March 31 compared to JD1.8 million during 1996/1997. Net earnings from insurance operation amounted to JD1.1 million (JD0.89 million in 96/97). Net premiums from the marine insurance department was 18.6 per cent lower during 97/98 as it amounted to JD1.3 million, JD301,452 less than the JD1.6 mil-

lion recorded in 96/97. Net premiums from the fire insurance department declined by JD185,607, or 7.94 per cent, with the total being JD2.2 million (JD2.3 million in 96/97). The results were almost unchanged for the vehicle insurance department as premiums during the periods covered were both at JD5.97 million with the difference being only JD3,932.

The decline in the amount of premiums was highest at the general accidents insurance department which collected JD1 million in 98/97, JD636,890 or 8.70 per cent less than the JD1.6 million net premiums during 96/97. The life and health insurance department recorded a 7.53 per cent drop as the amount of net premiums stood at JD403,747 in 97/98, JD32,881 less than the JD436,628 posted in the previous year.

Abu Hassan told the general assembly that the continuation of economic recession in the region and the increase in the number of insurance companies were the main causes for the drop in volume of the company's activities. The chairman concluded that the company has obtained the legal registration in the Palestinian territories and that JIC is about to open branches there.

According to the balance sheet as of March 31, 1998 the company's total assets amounted to JD21.1 million of which JD9.1 million are current assets. At the end of March 1997, total assets amounted to JD20.7 million of which JD9.04 million were current assets. The general assembly approved the distribution of JD600,000 in dividends to shareholders at the rate of 12 per cent (Al Ra'i).


Kodak puts \$2.5m into Israel venture fund

TEL AVIV (R) — Eastman Kodak has invested \$2.5 million in Israel's Eucalyptus Venture Capital Fund, the fund's managers said Wednesday.

Don Corn, a vice president for Kodak, was quoted as saying that the company looked at its interest in the fund as an entree into the Israeli high technology industry.

Kodak earlier this year acquired a 51 per cent stake in Israel's PictureVision Inc., a company that has developed technology for storing and delivering photos over the Internet.

The Eucalyptus fund, formed earlier this year by the U.S. Investment Bank Hambrecht & Quist and Israel's Tamir Fishman, said it was close to completing its fund-raising. The fund will have \$55 million under management for investment in Israeli Internet, software, semiconductor and other high tech companies.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET												
HOUSING BANK CENTERS AMMAN - SUDESHARI TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179 ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 09/09/1998												
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOS- ING PRICE	CHANGE		
S 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	18.4	.89	20	410	91995	224.00	224.50	.50+		
2.100	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.5	4.22	13	7450	12325	1.65	1.66	.01+		
S 3.200	1.030	BANK OF JORDAN	E	0.00	5	2600	2686	1.03	1.05	.02+		
S 6.820	2.610	THE POSTAL BK.	19.4	3.27	16	11050	33849	3.05	3.05	.01+		
S 1.450	1.750	JOR. KUNAT BANK	8	0.00	3	100	178	1.80	1.78	.02-		
S 1.870	.800	JOR. GOLF BANK	9	0.00	11	75100	44309	.60	.59	.01-		
S 3.940	1.690	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.7	0.00	3	590	1021	1.72	1.73	.01+		
S 3.900	1.350	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	22.8	3.38	4	300	443	1.49	1.48	.01-		
.930	.600	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	P	0.00	20	49083	33714	.69	.69	-		
BANK SECTOR TOTALS												
INDEX: 295.10			%CHG: +0.23		93	146683	220519					
2.850	1.740	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	7.5	9.26	1	200	540	2.68	2.70	.02+		
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS												
INDEX: 127.27			%CHG: +0.09		1	200	540					
S 2.240	1.470	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.6	5.57	10	3506	5337	1.49	1.48	.01-		
1.480	.740	NATL. PORTFOLIO	31.1	0.00	12	4750	3738	.80	.78	.02-		
.590	.280	JORDAN EXCH. TRAD.	1	0.00	1	150	150	.30	.30	-		
S 1.480	1.060	MID. EAST HOTELS	P	0.00	2	61	67	1.10	1.10	-		
1.830	1.060	UNITED CO.	5.0	9.73	4	1500	1695	1.13	1.13	-		
1.350	.950	UNITED FOR FINANC. INV.	1.4	5.90	2	2250	2453	1.09	1.09	-		
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS												
INDEX: 108.75			%CHG: +0.16		32	12681	13465					
3.900	1.840	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	11.7	5.58	17	3870	7595	1.96	1.97	.01+		
6.500	4.070	ARAB POTASH CO.	20.2	4.88	6	21700	89728	4.20	4.10	.10-		
11.250	10.050	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.2	8.43	4	253	2667	10.52	10.54	.02+		
S 1.570	1.050	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	11.3	7.00	1	1000	1020	1.01	1.02	.01+		
S 7.350	5.650	JOR. WOODSTED MILLS	7.4	3.54	2	108	610	5.65	5.65	-		
S 5.740	2.400	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.4	2.81	6	4000	10718	2.70	2.67	.03-		
2.400	1.700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	12.0	34.71	3	3000	5100	1.70	1.70	-		
.570	.390	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	13.9	0.00	8	6500	2665	.42	.41	.01-		
.620	.390	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	4	500	206	.43	.41	.02-		
.590	.300	INTERFERO. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	6	9000	3235	.37	.35	.02-		
+ .690	.390	JOR. RICHMOND INDUS.	9	0.00	1	100	37	.39	.37	.02-		
1.760	.750	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	8.5	9.64	1	100	83	.80	.83	.03+		
S 2.360	.700	WATL. CHEM. WIRE MFG.	33.8	0.00	19	8150	5933	.75	.72	.03-		
.730	.380	JOR. SULPH. CHEM.	7.8	0.00	9	2850	1186	.43	.41	.02-		
1.470	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	13.9	4.76	2	700	682	1.26	1.26	-		
S 1.290	.530	UNIV. MED. INDUS.	10.0	9.52	81	78110	49464	.63	.63	-		
.930	.500	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9	0.00	8	2800	1456	.53	.52	.01-		
1.500	1.200	WATL. CHEM. INDUS.	8.8	7.94	6	5026	3456	1.26	1.26	-		
1.080	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	9.2	15.38	26	20960	13544	.65	.65	-		
S 1.310	.910	WATL. CHEM. INDUS.	6.5	6.34	13	12550	7426	.92	.92	-		
1.250	.850	UNION CH. & VEG.	11.0	0.00	11	3500	3582	.95	1.00	.05+		
.890	.650	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	9	27000	22950	.85	.85	-		
.710	.580	NAT. ALUMINUM	34.2	0.00	56	32550	22041	.68	.69	.01+		
.670	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	10.1	0.00	19	15200	8489	.56	.56	-		
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS												
INDEX: 80.82			%CHG: -1.02		312	280727	292946					
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 177.71		%CHG: -0.08		438	440291	527471			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 09/09/1998												
N	1.050	.880	EXPORT & FIN. BK. 751	16.5	0.00	9	13924	8911	.89	.89	-	
500	.340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	3	7000	2870	.40	.41	.01+		
.800	.500	UNION INV.	9	0.00	2	10020	5210	.52	.52	-		
.620	.240	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	30	60300	15678	.26	.26	-		
N 2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	1	3000	3660	1.22	1.22	-		
.260	.090	JOR. INDUS. MACHS-JEMCO	9	0.00	4	30500	2745	.09	.09	-		
.600	.270	ARAB FOOD & MFG.	9	0.00	20	15250	4835	.30	.31	.01+		

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Looks like money is coming in today, or at least you could make that happen. The major obstacle might be your own resistance. Don't play hooky, or you'll mess up your chances for a raise, promotion or some other goodie that will lead to an increase in income. Stick to business, and prosper.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your good luck continues through most of the day. You could run into a couple of problems tonight, but don't let them bother you. It looks like a loved one wants something you can't afford to provide. This is not a big problem. This whole situation will be forgotten by tomorrow.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Things look pretty well settled down, but that's not necessarily true. Some glitches could occur this evening, so be watching for them. A system you're putting into effect doesn't have all the bugs worked out yet. That's OK. Just anticipate more changes and you won't be dismayed if you have to make them.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) There could be problems for other people today. You're in a good position to provide counsel. Stay calm, cool and collected, and you'll seem like the pillar of strength you want to be. Actually, you're gaining from friends and relatives. They're giving you good advice. Pass it along and you'll look like the wise one.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) The lessons we most resist are the ones we most need to learn. If you come up against a baffling situation today, take your time to figure it out. You don't get more points for moving more quickly. In this case, you'll get the most points for making the most sensible decisions. Keep that in mind.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Looks like the train's stalled today, if not completely derailed. It's not your fault. You planned carefully, but there were variables you couldn't have predicted. Everyone's looking at you, but it doesn't mean you made a mistake. They just think you're the most likely person to figure out the next step. And you are.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It's time to make a financial decision. There could be something a little difficult about this one, but you're in a good position to open the communication channels. If you've got a conflict going, especially with a loved one, just keep the other person talking. You keep listening. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It might seem like every time you turn around, you're running into a closed door. That's OK. The lesson for today is about patience and perseverance. Don't give up. Let others know what's in it for them, and you'll get them working for you instead of against you. Then you'll see amazing results.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The work's there, and your responsibility is increasing. Don't worry. The money will come, too. It's just a matter of getting things rolling first. Right now, look to see what needs to be done, then jump in and do it. You're investing in your own future, and it's going to work, too.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Something you want to happen isn't quite materializing, but that doesn't mean it never will. There are commitments to be made and details to be figured out. Take care of them first. Go ahead and start a big project now, and don't be dismayed if it doesn't get completed right away.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) There's stress on you, some of it financial. You're not sure where you're going to get the money you want to achieve your objectives. Those goals look almost within reach, too. Don't let a minor setback get you down. It's just another puzzle to be solved. Look at it as part of the game and it'll be more fun.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Something at work won't go the way you planned it. An assignment you're offered seems practically impossible. Just get back to the drawing board. You need a pattern to follow, and you may have to draw it up yourself. Now the assignment doesn't look so hard, does it? It's just another way for you to show off your talent.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Something you're learning will be useful later. It's upsetting your routine today, but it's necessary. You need to know what's going on before you go in the wrong direction. You don't have to spend time at it, once you figure out what to study. It's probably the very thing you're avoiding.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Wrap up old business today, but be cautious about starting new projects. Postpone a shopping trip until Sunday. You're more apt to find what you want at good prices than. Put your finances in order this evening. It's important to know what you've got so you know how much you can spend.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The sun's in Virgo, and Virgo and Gemini are squared to each other. You're each other's natural teachers. You teach them to be more spontaneous; they teach you to be better organized. You teach them to try new things; they teach you to establish routines that work. The combination produces great results, so relax.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Conditions are even more unsettled today. You're under a little more pressure. Everybody wants something from you, but it's not clear what. Unfortunately, this person is getting worked into a frenzy. Hopefully, you can figure out what's required, quickly. Calm everybody down, for starters. Cookies and milk might do the trick.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You'll have more time for playing with friends today, and that's a relief. Talk to them about what's been going on, but don't give them all the details. You're still in the middle of negotiations. That means you need to hold your cards close to the vest. Be friendly, but don't let everybody know what you're up to.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Changes made recently are causing unrest. People aren't sure what they should be doing, and consequently they're not doing much of anything. An older person seems to be leaning on you. You might think he or she is asking too much, and that could be the rise to the challenge. You're much more capable than you think you are.

LIBRA

U.S. OPEN

Hingis lifts game to down Seles

NEW YORK (R) — Defending champion Martina Hingis found the game that brought her four

Grand Slam titles by the age of 17 in time to down sentimental favourite Monica Seles on Tuesday

night and earn a return trip to the semifinals of the U.S. Open.

The top-seeded world

number one still had not stopped smiling long after her exciting 6-4 6-4 victory over the two-time former champion ended something of a crisis of confidence for the Swiss sensation.

"I'm happy I still can play tennis out there. I just felt very good out there tonight," said Hingis, who is without a title since the Italian Open in early May and had not been pleased with her play in the run to the quarter-finals.

"Definitely, I was a little bit worried about my game," admitted Hingis, who jumped for joy as if she had won the tournament after smacking an ace on match point to end the 72-minute contest that featured high-quality, entertaining shotmaking from both players.

"I have the feeling I'm getting better again," added Hingis.

Hingis That Hingis had lost her last two matches with Seles — last month in Montreal and in the French Open semifinals — weighed heavily on her mind entering Tuesday's contest. "She kind of killed me in that match," Hingis said of the Roland Garros rout.

But on this cool, breezy night, tennis' teen queen came up with the big shots at crucial times in the match, saving six of seven break points she faced and keeping the sixth-seeded former number one on the

Seles played with determination and intensity. But Hingis showed the remarkable poise and instinct for coming up with the right angles that helped her take the tennis world by storm last year.

A lone service break in the fifth game was just the edge Hingis needed to take the tight first set.

They traded breaks in the first two games of the second set and Hingis saved three break points in the fourth game to keep Seles

A bit of luck finally put Hingis in the driver's seat.

Seles was facing double break point at 3-3, 15-40 when the top seed hit a backhand return that caught the net cord and fell on Seles's side of the net.

Hingis, brimming with renewed confidence, then held her final two service games at love to take her place in the final four.

"I really feel on just a couple of key points, she played a lot higher percentage tennis than I did," said Seles, the 1991 and 1992 champion.

"I knew coming in that she's going to want to win this match really badly, so she's going to try to raise her level of game and I think she did that," Seles added. "She definitely did that at the key times."

In the semifinals, Hingis will take on her doubles partner, third seed Jana Novotna, a winner earlier on Tuesday.

The Wimbledon champion overcame "brutal" swirling winds to post a 6-2 6-3 victory Hingis's Swiss Fed Cup teammate, 11th seed Patty Schnyder, who had shocked five-time champion Steffi Graf in the previous round.

In the late Tuesday night match, they replayed the French Open final in the fourth round of the U.S. Open and the result was the same, a straight-sets victory for 10th seed Carlos Moya over close friend and fellow Spaniard Alex Corretja, the seventh seed.

Playing in front of a few hardcore fans who remained after the Hingis-Seles match, Moya posted a hard-fought 7-6 7-5 6-3 victory in two hours, 41 minutes to nail down the final men's quarter-final berth.

Moya, who needed five sets in his two previous wins, next meets unseeded Magnus Larsson, one of three Swedes to make it to the final eight, along with Jonas Bjorkman and Thomas Johansson.

Bjorkman, the 12th seed and a semifinalist last year, earned a crack at defending champion Patrick Rafter with a 6-4 2-6 6-2 6-2 win over Dutchman Jan Siemerink.

The third-seeded Rafter continued the red-hot play that brought him three hardcourt titles this summer, taking out Wimbledon runner-up Goran Ivanisevic 5-3 6-4 4-6 6-1.

Unseeded Johansson
Upset error-prone Russian
Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the
11th-seeded former French
Open champion. 3-6 6-3 6-
3 7-6, and will next meet
Joie-serving Australian
Mark Philippoussis, who
upset 13th-seeded Briton
Tim Henman 7-5 0-6 6-4 6-

Larsson bounced a fellow unseeded player, German Oliver Gross, 6-4 7-5 5-7 6-

Ninth seed Karol Kucera of Slovakia disappointed fans clamouring for an Andre Agassi-Pete Sampras quarter-final by coming back from down a break in the fifth set to upend eighth seed Agassi 6-3 6-3 6-7 1-6 1-3.

Agassi had just turned the tide in his favour when rain topped play Monday night and he was unable to complete his comeback on Tuesday.

"It doesn't take much for me to get away from you," lamented a disappointed Agassi, the 1994 champion.



Carlos Moya of Spain returns a backhand to Alex Corretja of Spain during U.S. Open fourth round play at the USTA National Tennis Center Tuesday 8. Moya won 7-6 7-5 6-3 to advance to the quarterfinal (Reuters photo)



Venus Williams

U.S. Open at a glance

NEW YORK (AP) -- Highlights of Tuesday's play in the \$14 million U.S. Open tennis championships:

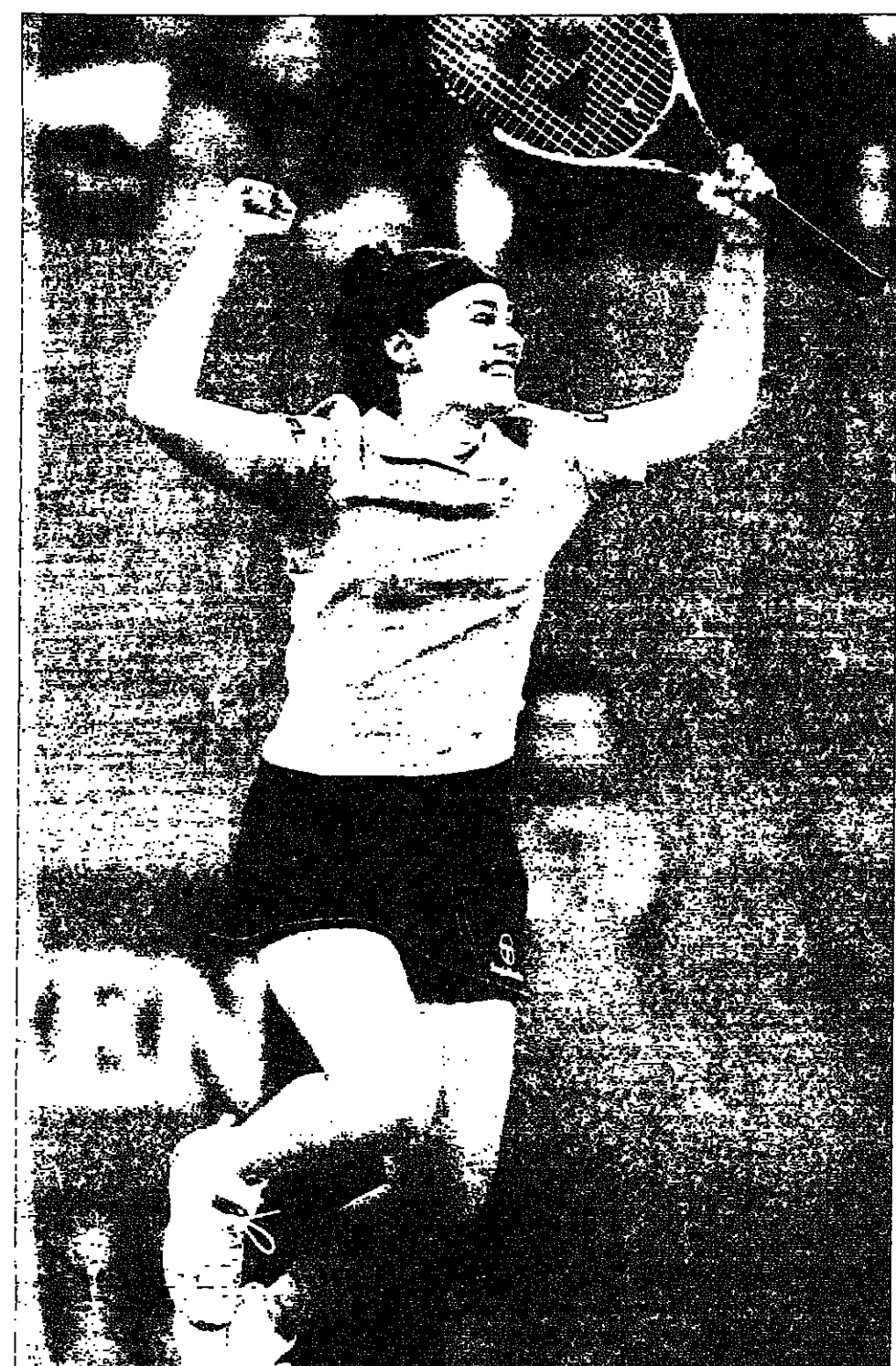
Weather: Overcast and cool with a brief shower and a high of 74 F (23 C).

Attendance: Day: 19.150, Night: 16.762, Total: 35,912.

Results: Swedes Jonas Björkman, Magnus Larsson and Thomas Johansson, along with Carlos Moya, Karol Kucera, Marj. Philippoussis and defending champion Patrick Rafter, advanced to the men's quarterfinals. Wimbledon champion Jana Novotna and defending champion Martina Hingis advanced to the women's semifinals. Novotna beat Patty Schnyder 6-2, 6-3. Hingis beat Monica Seles 6-1, 6-4.

State of the Day: Karol Kucera is the only player other than Jim Courier in 1991 to beat Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras in a Grand Slam event in the same year. Kucera beat Sampras in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open.

Quote of the Day: "Last night had its own elements. He [Kucera] was just returning the ball, winning points. All of a sudden, when I returned the ball, he wasn't ready to hurt me. Today he was and he did." — Andre Agassi.

[illegible]

Martina Hingis of Switzerland leaps for joy after beating Monica Seles of the U.S. during fourth round play at the USTA National Tennis Center Tuesday 8. Hingis, the top seed and defending champion won in straight sets 6-4 6-1 (Reuters photo)



Slovakia's Karol Kucera returns a backhand shot to Andre Agassi of the United States during the fourth round of U.S. Open play at the USA National Tennis Center in New York Tuesday 8. Kucera, the men's ninth seed at the Open, won the match 6-3 6-3 6-7 6-3. (REUTERS photo)

TODAY AT	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5677420</small> PHILADELPHIA '1' <i>Sophie Marceau in Leo Tolstoy's</i> ANNA KARENINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5677421</small> PHILADELPHIA '2' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5692928</small> PLAZA <i>Comedian Adel Imam .. in</i> AL ZA'EEM Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 <i>Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30</i>	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5677420</small> CONCORD <u>CONCORD '1'</u> NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONTACT Shows: 8:15, 10:30 <u>CONCORD '2'</u> UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5937991</small> GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN <i>www.cns.com.jo/Galleria1</i> GODZILLA Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30	<small>CINEMA TEL: 5937992</small> GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN <i>www.cns.com.jo/Galleria2</i> CITY OF ANGELS Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 <i>Adel Imam .. in</i> AL ZA'EEM at 10:30 p.m.	Fishan Yares Theatre TEL: 4625155 WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW PLAY
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Commonwealth Games

Games competitors run for cover on first day

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP)

The biggest-ever Commonwealth Games started Wednesday with a tropical downpour turning the cricket into a lottery and organisers putting a brave face on empty stands.

Competition started two days ahead of the official opening for the first Games staged in Asia, but one which will be crucial for the future of the event. Cricket, hockey, rugby sevens and netball have been brought in for the first time to add to the event's international appeal which this year has drawn 4,000 athletes from 70 nations.

Australia's cricketers, led by Mark Waugh, opened their campaign with a nine-wicket thrashing of Canada in only two hours, while Sri Lanka hammered hosts Malaysia by seven-wickets.

But the Indian batsmen and Riley Jacobs' Antigua scurried for cover, along with Scotland and Pakistan teams at a nearby ground when the heavens opened.

India may have been saved from an embarrassing defeat, but the solitary point for the abandoned match was a major blow for Pakistan and the cricket contest risks being turned into a game chance if the daily downpours continue.

Pakistan immediately called for earlier starts and shorter matches to avoid storms. Organisers may run Friday's opening ceremony on another day if a downpour strikes.

Pakistan were also given a scare in the opening men's hockey when they only managed to beat minnows Kenya 5-4. Inuran Yousaf scored four for the winners, but the African side came back from 4-2 to stretch the favourites.

Australia's men hammered India's ailing side 5-2 and the world champion Australian women, who have complained about the pitch being too dangerous to play on, destroyed Scotland 6-0.

Even when the sun was out, athletes were not happy. A Games village spokesman said athletes were "drinking like crazy" to avoid dehydration in the 34 degrees centigrade temperatures in Kuala Lumpur.

Suzana Bujang from the host nation's synchronised swimming team fainted in the heat during training Wednesday.

Malaysia had some good news when their top seeded men's badminton side hammered Jamaica 5-0 in the preliminary pools.

Ong Ewe Hock, favourite to win the men's singles gold, conceded only seven points as he got Malaysia off to a winning start against Graham Bradley.

The team are hottest favourites of any event at the Games, but there was little acclaim from the empty stands. Most of the people in the badminton stadium were players, officials, volunteers or police officers.

There were also pre-

The growing Games

CANADA

I - 1930 Hamilton

11 countries 400 competitors

V - 1954 Vancouver

24 countries 662 competitors

XI - 1978 Edmonton

48 countries 1,500 competitors

XV - 1994 Victoria

67 countries 3,000 competitors

JAMAICA

VIII - 1966 Kingston

34 countries 1,050 competitors

AUSTRALIA

III - 1938 Sydney

15 countries 464 competitors

VII - 1962 Perth

35 countries 863 competitors

XII - 1982 Brisbane

47 countries 2,143 competitors

BRITAIN

II - 1934 London

16 countries 500 competitors

VI - 1958 Cardiff

35 countries 1,130 competitors

IX - 1970 Edinburgh

42 countries 1,383 competitors

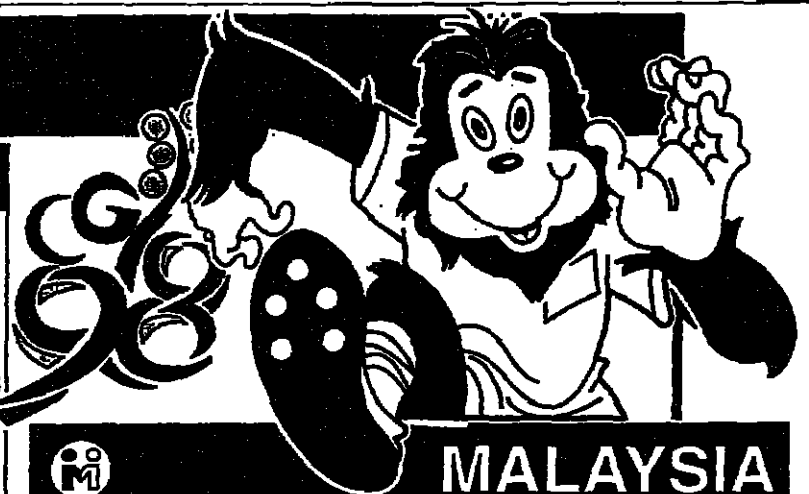
XIII - 1986 Edinburgh

20 countries*

1911 London:

First Empire Sports - forerunner of the Commonwealth Games.

Five events only.



MALAYSIA

XVI - 1998 Kuala Lumpur

70 countries 4,200 competitors

NEW ZEALAND

IV - 1950 Auckland

12 countries 590 competitors

X - 1974 Christchurch

38 countries 1,276 competitors

XIV - 1990 Auckland

57 countries 2,900 competitors

* Affected by South Africa boycott

vious few spectators in the cricket grounds, despite the big names on display like world number one batsman, Sachin Tendulkar and West Indies bowler Curtley Ambrose.

Malaysia's Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin emphasised the importance of hosting the 16th Commonwealth Games describing it as the coun-

try's showcase to the world and emphasising how it had inspired the Malaysian people to forget the country's economic and political crisis.

"This has not dampened their spirit in any way," he said. But Muhyiddin admitted that barely 400,000 tickets had been sold of the 1.28 million available. Organisers said that fig-

ure was higher than in Victoria four years ago. But Malaysian firms have bought many of the tickets to hand out to children. Muhyiddin insisted however the Games would

still be a success that would lead to Malaysia winning its bid to host the 2006 Asian Games. Malaysia has also has ambitions to stage an Olympics.

Participants gear up for National Rally

By Roufan Nahhas

AMMAN — The Second of four LG National Rallies for the 1998 season kicks off Friday with 14 drivers taking part in the one-day event.

The rally, organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ), will cover a distance of 194.76 km with three sections and 8 special stages.

The drivers will pass through Alook, Rumman and Sheileh areas.

A heated competition is expected between Jordan's 1997 Open National Champion Mohammed Daoud, who took sixth place in August's International Rumman Hill Climb, and his brother Ahmad who took first place in the National Rally in April.

"Ahmad will face tough competition from his brother Mohammed which will make it exciting to follow," RACJ spokesperson Bader Rasheed told the Jordan



Ahmad Daoud in his Renault 5 (File photo)

Times. Popular Jordanian racers and one Irish racer will compete Friday for the title. "Amar Haddad, who

returned to the rally scene after a long absence, will join the race, as well as Jordan's champion Fares Bustami," he said.

"Lee Den from Ireland holds a Jordanian driver's license which entitles him to compete in the national rally," he added.

"According to the regulations any person holding a valid Jordanian license can compete with Jordanian drivers," Rasheed pointed out.

Asked why women drivers would be absent in this event, Rasheed said, "lack of support is one reason that did not allow our lady drivers to participate in the national rally."

RACJ will prepare for the coming Pepsi Speed Test on Oct 23 and the Third National Rally which will take place on Oct 30.

Among other preparations the club will organise Rally Tour in November and the 4x4 Rally which is scheduled in December, according to Rasheed.

Awards and prizes will be presented to the winners of the National Rally in a special ceremony Friday evening at the RACJ.

Murdoch buys Manchester United for record price

LONDON (AP) — Manchester United, among the world's wealthiest soccer clubs, announced Wednesday its board has accepted a record 623.4 million pound (\$1 billion) buyout offer from Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB satellite television company.

The deal, the highest price ever paid for a sports team, evoked a storm of protest from fans and some lawmakers, and many charged it would give the Australian-born media magnate a stranglehold on televising Premier League soccer.

A supporters' club vowed to fight the deal, which needs the approval of shareholders and the government, and protests were urged at Wednesday night's match

against Charlton Athletic. "We've certainly not betrayed our supporters," Manchester United chief executive Martin Edwards said, facing a string of largely hostile questions at a joint news conference.

"We've secured a safe future for them." The offer, in cash and shares, values Manchester United shares at 240 pence (396 cents) each. BSkyB offered 120 pence (198 cents) plus 0.2537 BSkyB shares for each Manchester United share.

On Friday, before news broke of the negotiations, Manchester United shares closed at 159 pence (264 cents).

The price far outstripped the \$350 million that Fox Sports, a division of Murdoch's

News Corp., paid for the Los Angeles Dodgers in March — a record price for a baseball team.

BSkyB chief executive Martin Booth tried to allay fans' fears.

"Our interests are 100 percent aligned with the Manchester United fans," Booth said. "They want to win the league, so do we. They want to win the [Football Association] cup, so do we. They want to have the best players and best manager, so do we."

In a statement posted on the electronic announcement system of the London Stock Exchange, BSkyB said it recognised the club was "not just another business, it is part of the cultural fabric of Manchester and the nation."

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The British Council EXAMINATIONS

GCE/IGCSE

The British Council would like to announce that entries for Edexcel Foundation (London Exams) GCE January 1999 session and the University of Cambridge IGCSE/GCE November 1998 session will be accepted from Sunday 13 - Tuesday 15 September.

We encourage candidates to register during this period to avoid payment of the late entry fee.

Registration time: 09:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Candidates are required to bring with them a recent photo, an official identification and a copy of their passport.

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WATCH OUT FOR THE NEW PLAY

AI: Israel, PNA consistently violate human rights

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have consistently violated human rights in the name of security in the five years since they signed their first peace agreement, the human rights group Amnesty International (AI) said Wednesday.

During the five-year period, Israel has arrested more than 8,000 Palestinians and routinely subjected them to torture, the London-based group said in a 40-page report.

Israel's Supreme Court has legitimised the use of torture and detention without trial, the report said. The PNA has detained hundreds of suspected Islamists and collaborators, and 19 people have died in detention, most as a result of torture, the group said.

David Bar-Ilan, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said the detentions were a necessary tool to protect Israel and save lives.

Nabil Abourdenah, an adviser to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, could not immediately be reached for comment.

However, Hanan Ashrawi, a human rights campaigner and until recently a minister in Arafat's cabinet, said the deaths in detention were "a source of serious concern." Amnesty said both sides engaged in human rights violations in the name of security, but the Palestinian population has become the main victim of the violations.

It said some of the PNA's violations were carried out under pressure from the United States and Israel,

which have called for a crackdown on Islamists responsible for more than a dozen suicide bombings in Israel since 1994.

"In a spiral of violence, killings of Palestinians by Israeli security services or settlers have led to suicide bombings [by Islamists] and the deaths of Israeli civilians," the report said.

"These have led to waves of arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention, torture and unfair trials," Bar-Ilan accused Amnesty of using "an obnoxious double standard." He said the report did not give sufficient weight to the Hamas suicide bombings and brushed at the claim that Israel was pressuring the PNA to violate human rights.

Most of those targeted by the PNA were people suspected of cooperation with

Israel, he said.

"To blame the dictatorial, corrupt and arbitrary regime of the Palestinian Authority... on Israeli and American pressure is to insult history and plain common sense," he said.

In its report, Amnesty also said that an Israeli commission of inquiry has endorsed the principle of allowing Israeli security forces to kill suspected terrorists anywhere in the world.

The commission had criticised the Israeli security services for botching the assassination of Khaled Misha'al, an Islamist leader in Jordan, last year, but it did not question the government's decision to carry out such operations, the report said.

'Israel, Turkey to hold joint air exercise'

TEL AVIV (AP) — In a new sign of increasing military cooperation, Israel and Turkey are to hold their first joint air exercise this month, a British journal said Wednesday.

Several Arab countries in the region, especially Syria, have expressed concern about the Israeli-Turkish military alliance.

Israel and Turkey say their cooperation is not directed against other countries and is aimed at promoting stability in the region.

The air exercise will take place in Israel between Sept. 13-16, Jane's Defence Weekly reported. Turkish F-16 jet fighters from Diyarbakir air base

will take part, the journal said.

Israeli Defence Ministry spokesman Avi Benayahu would not confirm or deny the report, but said that the Israeli and Turkish air forces have already trained in each other's air space.

"Each side carries out manoeuvres according to its needs, taking advantage of the air space of the other country," he said.

A squadron of Turkish F-16s was in Israel in June to train on testing grounds run by the Israeli Air Force and the Rafel Arms Development Authority, the Jerusalem Post newspaper said Wednesday.

At the range in southern Israel, pilots train to evade

surface-to-air missiles — possibly similar to the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles Greek Cypriots plan to deploy in November to balance Turkish air superiority over the island, the paper said.

The Israeli army spokesman's office denied Turkish media reports that Turkish pilots had trained in Israel to evade the S-300.

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, who visited Israel this week, confirmed that the Israeli and Turkish navies will conduct a joint search and rescue naval exercise in November, their second this year.

Aziz: Butler's report baseless

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq on Tuesday said a report by chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler that his arms experts had been barred from three sites was politically motivated and a lie aimed at discrediting Baghdad.

Butler, executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) told the Security Council last Thursday that Iraq in August and September refused three times to allow his teams to monitor sites they had visited previously, thereby tightening earlier restrictions imposed by Iraq.

In a letter to the Security Council, Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister, said Butler's contentions "include, as usual, fallacies and lies aimed at distorting the facts before the Security Council."

Iraq said on Aug. 5 it would no longer cooperate with U.N. inspection teams, thus preventing them from carrying out most of their duties. Baghdad, however, said the U.N. experts could monitor previously declared sites but could not conduct intrusive inspections.

Aziz's letter reached members as they discussed a U.S.-British resolution to suspend regular 60-day reviews of sanctions until Iraq cooperates with the inspectors. Without the reviews, there is no possibility of easing the embargoes, although chances are slim this would occur in the near future anyway.

Britain's ambassador, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, told reporters: "The points that have been accepted by the council in the debate so far is that there should be a suspension of sanctions on Iraq." Diplomats said they expected a vote later this week.



HARMLESS OR TOXIC? GREENPEACE GETS SHOWERED: Workers dump water and waste on Greenpeace activists as they try to paint the words 'no dumping' on a ship loaded with rust at a waste loading facility of the Larco ferronickel plant in the port city of Larymna, some 130 kilometres north of Athens on Wednesday. Larco, one of Europe's leading ferronickel manufacturers, claims the waste is harmless. Greenpeace says it is toxic. Larco says continued action by Greenpeace could lead to a shut down (AP photo)

First in N. Ireland as Adams meets Trimble face-to-face

BELFAST (AFP) — A new first in the Northern Ireland peace process will be achieved Thursday when the head of the IRA's political wing meets the province's Protestant leader face-to-face for the first time.

The substance of the talks between Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams and Northern Ireland's First Minister David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, is likely to be far less important than their symbolism.

Before entering talks leading to this year's April 10 peace deal Trimble and his party refused even to be in the same room as Adams and other Sinn Féin members, whom they regarded as little more than apologists for pro-unionist Irish terrorists.

The bulk of the discussions for the agreement had to be conducted via intermediaries who shuttled between the two camps as they sat in separate rooms.

Since then the pair only met in the company of other parties who will make up the province's new semi-autonomous administration, which was set up under the peace deal.

Even with Trimble's insis-

tence that the choreography will not include a public handshake, the first one-on-one meeting marks a milestone in the peace process in a conflict in which images often assume huge importance.

Thursday's talks have been arranged to prepare for the opening of Northern Ireland's new 108-member assembly on Sept. 14.

Trimble called all the assembly parties together for a collective discussion Monday and is now holding bilateral talks with every party leader.

Ulster Unionist protests at a meeting with Sinn Féin were silenced last week after a statement by Adams that violence "must be for all of us now a thing of the past, over, done with and gone."

A day later the party announced it was appointing Adams' deputy Martin McGuinness, a key figure in the republican movement often accused of IRA membership, to head negotiations on IRA disarmament.

Preliminary bilateral discussions between Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionists were being held Wednesday to clarify Thursday's agenda.

The body's first task is to

elect an executive and this is likely to form the focus of the talks.

Sinn Féin insists its popular support — it won 18 seats in the assembly elections in June — guarantees it two executive seats.

Trimble has said the party cannot sit on the body until the Irish Republican Army (IRA) begins disarming.

His party — Northern Ireland's largest Protestant party — has threatened to use its strength in the assembly to block Sinn Féin's appointment to any ministerial positions.

Adams said Monday's meeting passed off without "acrimony" and in a "good atmosphere" but added the question of disarmament was not mentioned.

The Sinn Féin president also reiterated that all parties that signed up to the April peace deal had "an automatic right" to be "involved with all the institutions which are going to be established." However Trimble insisted he had told Adams that progress was needed on all fronts including those issues affecting "paramilitary-related" parties, a reference to the need for movement on weapons surrendering.

Spice Girls encourage teens to get pregnant

LONDON (AP) — The Spice Girls, who gave Girl Power to a generation of teens, may be unwittingly encouraging teen pregnancy, an educator says. Judith Mullen, president of the Secondary Heads Association, said Tuesday that the pregnancies of Posh Spice Victoria Adams and Scary Spice Mel Brown could trigger "a generation of Spice babies born to teenage mothers." But Mullen stressed she is not criticising the two Spice Girls, noting that they are in their 20s and "in loving, caring relationships."

Enjoy sex to get pregnant

CARDIFF (R) — A woman may have a higher chance of getting pregnant if she enjoys sex, a British researcher said. A study of 71 women who rated their sexual pleasure showed that fewer sperm were found in the cervix of the women who did not enjoy sex than in those who found it more stimulating. The research, by Jacky Boivin of Cardiff University, is important because if the amount of sperm in cervical mucus is a predictor of future fertility it could have implications for infertile couples.

Ancient skeletons show women worked harder

CARDIFF (R) — Ancient skeletons found on a remote island off Scotland showed women did more heavy manual work than men 400 years ago, a scientist said on Wednesday. By examining the spines of people who lived and died on the island of Ensay between the 16th and 19th centuries, Joanna Sofaer Deverenski of Cambridge University said women suffered physically from strenuous labour. "We know that women did most of the heavy lifting work," she told a press conference at Britain's annual science conference. While the men fished or hunted, the women of the island of Ensay carried heavy loads of peat and other materials in creels, a sort of basket, on their backs.

Men in women's veils hold up UAE forex bureau

DUBAI (R) — Three men dressed in traditional "abayas" and veils worn by Arab women to rob a foreign exchange bureau in the tiny Gulf Arab emirate of Ajman, local newspapers reported on Wednesday. Disguised in the long-sleeved black cloak and veil, marks of national identity, the trio escaped with the day's takings from the Ajman branch of the UAE Exchange Centre after threatening staff at gun point. "The robbers, dressed as women in abaya and veil covering their faces...pointed guns at the staff before decamping with the day's collection in a rented car." The Gulf Today newspaper reported.

Dozens of 'Titanic' videos looted

ORLANDO (AP) — Someone out there really likes Leonardo DiCaprio. Dozens of copies of the just-released "Titanic" video were looted from three Orlando-area video stores this weekend. In each case, a burglar broke a window of a Blockbuster video store and stole armfuls of the hit movie from a display, said Jeff Goltz, a spokesman for the Orlando police department. Fifty-four "Titanic" videos and 18 "Titanic" compact discs were taken from one store.

Ritter: Iraq has 'technologically complete' nuclear weapons

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Iraq is hiding three "technologically complete" nuclear bombs which lack only the fissile material to make them operational, according to a former U.N. arms inspector quoted Wednesday in the Haaretz newspaper.

Haaretz said Scott Ritter, who quit the U.N. inspection team in Iraq last month charging that it was no longer carrying out its task aggressively enough, made the disclosure at a recent closed-door meeting of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Ritter was quoted as saying the U.N. inspections committee knew where the

three nuclear devices were being hidden and had information on how they were concealed and which officers were guarding them, but had not received an order to inspect the site.

He described the bombs as "technologically complete" and needing only the fissile nuclear material to become operational. Haaretz made no mention of whether Ritter believes Iraq has obtained any such nuclear material.

Ritter, a U.S. citizen, charged that the U.N. Security Council, under pressure from the U.S. administration, had blocked the work of the weapons

inspectors just as they were "on the doorstep" of uncovering Iraq's hidden weapons of mass destruction.

He said the United States wanted to avoid new confrontations with the government of President Saddam Hussein and had intervened to keep the U.N. teams from carrying out surprise inspections.

Ritter claimed the inspectors had uncovered evidence that Iraq could still have a large number of chemical bombs, between five and 12 Al Hussein ballistic missiles and parts for another 25 launchers.

Oslo brought no peace to Palestinian mother

By Jeffrey Heller
Reuters

HEBRON — The old Middle East is alive and well, five years after Israel and the Palestinians signed a peace deal that was meant to herald a new era of hope.

"I was weak and they were strong," was how Sherine Badr Al Haddad, a 23-year-old Palestinian mother, summed up an encounter with Israeli soldiers which she said led to the death of her three-month-old son Qosay, one of a set of triplets.

The difference between life and death for Qosay boiled down to being a roadblock too far from a hospital that might have saved him, Haddad said.

Her family's stone house is some 100 metres inside the part of Hebron that remained under Israeli occupation after the rest of the town came under Palestinian self-rule in 1997.

On Aug. 21, Qosay began vomiting while Haddad was changing his diaper. She scooped him up in her arms and headed towards Hebron's Alia Hospital, a 10-minute drive away.

But a curfew was in force in the Israeli-held section of the West Bank town. A day earlier, a suspected Palestinian assailant had stabbed a Jewish settler to death and set fire to his caravan home in Hebron.

"I walked up to the soldiers at the checkpoint, where there were two military jeeps, and they asked me where I was going," Haddad, her eyes brim-

ming with tears, told Reuters. "I said I was going to the hospital because my baby's very sick, and I showed him to them," she recalled as she fed milk to one of the surviving triplets in her living room.

"The soldiers said: 'You can't go, there's a curfew. We have no orders to let you pass.' I saw that time was being wasted, so I told one of the soldiers I wanted to return home. He said 'wait here.' I waited a while and then the soldiers got busy with a group of Palestinians, so I went into the vineyard and walked to the hospital from there."

Holding Qosay, Haddad walked for 40 minutes until she reached a Palestinian roadblock and hailed a taxi.

"On the way, Qosay made a gurgling sound and he stopped breathing," she said. "When the doctor examined him in the hospital he was already dead." At the hospital, Zia Abshab, who examined Qosay, told Reuters a day after the boy's death: "If he had come in time, we could have saved his life."

Asked about the incident, the Israeli army said the military governor of Hebron had visited the family and an investigation had been conducted into the allegations.

The army statement, alluding to the possible presence of paramilitary border police or Israeli civil police, acknowledged the incident "could have been a regrettable misunderstanding with forces enforcing the curfew, who were not aware that it was a medical emergency."

The army says soldiers at roadblocks have standing orders to show leniency in "urgent humanitarian and medical cases."

But in another incident during the Hebron curfew, Palestinian health officials charged that a newborn Arab baby died because of delays at an Israeli army checkpoint.

Fadwa Abdul Salam, 40, gave birth in her car after being forced to take a longer route to a Hebron hospital. The baby died after she finally reached the hospital.

The army said it was impossible to determine for certain the death was linked to the roadblock delay, "but it was clear the soldiers at the checkpoint made a mistake in judgement." Haddad said the loss of her son was just another indication that peace with Israel, heralded by the Oslo interim accords signed in Washington on September 13, 1993 would not work.

"Qosay was a complete innocent, the most beautiful baby I have ever seen," she said. "If I saw the soldiers again I would tell them, 'You Jews have children just like we have. Why did you do this to me?'"